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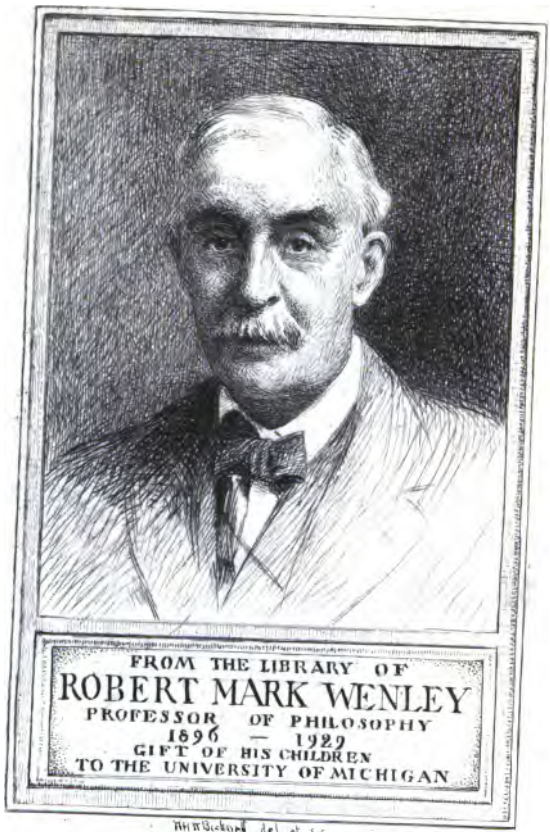

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CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

RECONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT

OF

MODERN THOUGHT,

BY

REV. GEORGE HENSLOW, M.A., F.L.S., F.G.S.,

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TO THE

REV. H. R. HAWEIS,

Incumbent of St. James's, Marylebone.

My Dear Haweis,

I thank you for allowing me to dedicate this book to you, as a slight mark of esteem; not only for yourself,—acquired during a friendship which has lasted for more than a quarter of a century,—but for your constant and earnest zeal in leading your congregation to apprehend all that is pure, noble and spiritual in our Religion.

Believe me to be,

Most truly yours,

GEORGE HENSLOW.

Drayton House, Ealing.

PREFACE.

In reconsidering certain Christian Beliefs, I have not attempted to discuss several of paramount interest and importance; such as the existence of God, the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, of Immortality, &c.; but only such with which the so-called "Scheme of Redemption" is mainly concerned. It might be at once observed that a future life is intimately connected with the Redemption of Mankind; but the reader will find that I adopt the view that a future life is comparatively seldom alluded to in the New Testament, and that the Salvation there spoken of affects a man *here*, and only by implication, *hereafter*. I would nevertheless add that I regard a future life, either in compensation or fulfilment, as a necessary part of our existence. I assume, as I fully believe in the existence of God the Father, who created the Universe by the methods of Evolution. I am equally convinced of the Divinity of our Lord, as will become apparent in the last chapter, at least; and that the Holy Spirit is the greatest source of spiritual strength to man, I accept in the fullest faith, as God's answer to prayer; in accordance with the promise of Jesus Christ, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good

gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

It may perhaps be thought that I ignore too much any theory of inspiration which may, at least, concern the earlier chapters of Genesis. Although I do not advance any theory of my own, I do hold the belief that there has ever been a divine purpose maintained throughout the entire Scriptures; that while the presence of an over-ruling Divine hand may not be evidently or even logically deducible in Genesis, yet the great end of Revelation, namely, the manifestation of the Moral character of God, as exemplified in Jesus Christ, fully justifies the belief that the Holy Spirit has been ever present throughout, working out the salvation of mankind through human and other secondary agencies according to His will.

If the saying recorded of Abbé Bautain be true that "Logic is a terrible cause of error," I plead guilty to having tried to be as logical as I can; but I trust, as the discovery of Truth is the sole object of the following "Re-considerations," that whatever logic may be herein found, it may be the humble means of removing error and not a fresh cause of it.

G. H.

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CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

RECONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN THOUGHT.

CHAPTER I.

CREATION OR EVOLUTION?

"God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."—*Gen.* i. 31.

THE year A.D. 1872* was remarkable for being the first of our era which has afforded any positive, external assistance of real value towards the endeavour to ascertain the origin of the first chapter of Genesis. The attempts to explain it by adaptations to the different stages of the growth of modern science, especially Geology, have been

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* Mr. Smith first publicly made known his discoveries at a Meeting of the Society of Biblical Archæology, December 3rd, 1872.

numerous; but from the nature of the case were based mainly on conjecture. The late Mr. George Smith, however, has brought to light,* if not the exact and original text from which our received version has sprung, at least one of the earliest forms of the probably prehistoric originals.

I purpose in this and the following chapter, first to compare our Biblical version with the Assyrian or rather Babylonish account, and secondly, with the latest facts and speculations of modern science; and finally, to see what moral lessons it may afford.

With regard to the dates, generally, of these Assyrian clay-tablets which constituted the libraries of the Kings of Nineveh and elsewhere, Mr. Smith tells us that by far the greatest number belong to the age of Assur-bani-pal (Sardanapalus of the Greeks), the last monarch who reigned over Assyria, B.C. 670; and that nearly every copy of the stories which correspond with Genesis, whether of the Creation, of the Flood, or of others, was inscribed during his reign.

Moreover, they are all professedly copies from earlier Babylonish texts, the originals of which have not yet been brought to light.

"The account of the Creation in days," writes Mr. Smith, "though probably of late Assyrian

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* *The Chaldean Account of Genesis, &c., new edition,* by A. H. Sayce, 1880. Sampson Low & Co.

origin in its present form, may nevertheless rest on older traditions. At present, however, it is not possible to assign to it any great antiquity."*

There appear to have been several varieties of the history of the Creation. One, for instance, from the city of Cutha,† agrees very closely with the well-known Chaldean account handed down by Berosus.

Tradition is sure to result in such variations before the age arrives when they become committed to writing; and the probability therefore is, that our version in Genesis is not an adaptation from any account now known, but from some other, and considering its noble simplicity and great purity, very probably an earlier form. Still, that which Mr. Smith has deciphered is certainly very pure, and shows without doubt a considerably nearer approximation to what was the original form of the history of the Creation than any hitherto known.

Unfortunately every tablet of the series is fragmentary, and some considerable portions are entirely wanting. Moreover, besides agreeing generally with the Biblical account, they show traces of having originally included much more matter than our received version.

The first fragment‡ of the series of tablets gives

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* *Chaldean Account, &c.*, p. 22.

† *l.c.*, p. 92. ‡ *l.c.*, p. 57.

the description of the void or chaos as well as part of the generation of the gods. The translation is as follows:—

1. At that time above, the heaven was unnamed:
2. below the earth by name was unrecorded;
3. the boundless deep also (was) their generator.
4. The chaos of the sea was she who bore the whole of them.
5. Their waters were collected together in one place, and
6. the flowering reed was not gathered, the marsh-plant was not grown.
7. At that time the gods had not been produced, any one of them;
8. By name they had not been called, destiny was not fixed.
9. Were made also the (great) gods,
10. the gods Lakhmu and Lakhamu were produced (the first), and
11. to growth they . . . . . .
12. the gods Sar and Kisar were made next.
13. The days were long; a long (time passed), (and)
14. the gods Anu (Bel and Hea were born of)
15. the gods Sar and (Kisar).

Now if we compare the above with Genesis i. 1, 2, we at once perceive differences as well as resemblances. Thus it is an obvious fact that the original form was *polytheistic*, that in Genesis being *mono-*

theistic. But more than this, the author of the creation in Genesis, apparently in order to insist forcibly on this point, *precedes* the whole account by the expression—"In the beginning *God* created the heavens and the earth," that is the universe; whereas in the Babylonish account it would seem to have been believed that chaotic matter was of eternal existence, that it was actually *antecedent* to the creation of the gods themselves; for as we see in Mr. Smith's translation, they are created while chaos is described as already existing.

In both accounts chaos is represented as a vast watery abyss.

The Babylonish legend follows the common eastern notion that this watery waste represents the female principle, and was the producing mother of all future existence (line 4).

According to Damascius (quoted by Mr. Smith) the Babylonians, ignoring one principle, constituted two, making *Apason* the husband of *Tauthe*, whose son is *Moymis*, which, he thinks, represents the intelligible world proceeding from two principles.

Here, however, we have the first existence called *Mummu Tiamatu*, a word signifying "chaos of the deep." But one may recognize the name Mummu Tiamatu as being identical with Moymis and Tauthe of Damascius.

It may be remarked here that Tiamatu must also be the same as the *Thalatth* of Berosus, and which

we are expressly told was the sea. This word again reappears as *Thalatta* in Greek.

What Mr. Smith observes upon this is so important that I quote it in full:—

"The Assyrian word *Mummu* is probably connected with the Hebrew *mehumah*, confusion, its Accadian equivalent being *Umun*. Besides the name of the chaotic deep called *tehom*, in Genesis, which is evidently the *Tiamat* of the Creation text, we have in Genesis the word *tohu*, waste, desolate or formless, applied to this chaos. The correspondence between the inscription and Genesis is here complete, both stating that a watery chaos preceded the Creation, and formed in fact the origin and groundwork of the universe. We have not only an agreement in sense, but what is rarer the *same word* used in both narratives as the name of the chaos, and given also in the account of Damascius."*

It is curious to find very similar ideas prevalent among savages at widely distant regions of the world; thus the Chipeways believe that the world existed at the first as a globe of water, out of which the Great Spirit raised the land (Dunn's *Oregon*, p. 102).

With the Polynesians the Heaven and Earth are believed to have always existed from the beginning; that the earth was at first covered with water until

* *l.c.*, p. 60.

Mawe drew up New Zealand with an enchanted fish-hook!

There next follows in the Assyrian tablets the creation of the gods Lakhmu and Lakhamu. These Mr. Smith tells us are "the male and female personifications of motion and production," and correspond to the moving *ruach*, wind or spirit, in Genesis i. 2.

Ruach by some interpreters is taken to mean simply the breath of heaven, that is the wind.* But does not this old Babylonish account lead us with a greater degree of certainty to the true origin of the meaning of *ruach?* in that it would seem to show that in Genesis it is a *monotheistic adaptation;* and what in the legend represents symbolically the union of two principles, is in our version adapted figuratively to God Himself? For the words more strictly translated should be "the Spirit of God *brooded* upon the face of the waters."

The next stage represents the creation of the gods Sar and Kisar, which signify, our author informs us, the upper expanse and the lower expanse.

Line 13 would seem to hint at the idea of the creation having extended over vast epochs of time, as is now known must have been the case, and that a "day" may signify an indefinite period.

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* Goodwin, *Essays and Reviews*, p. 263.

Next follows the generation of the gods Anu, Elum and Hea. Anu represents heaven, Elum the earth and Hea the sea.

We may here note how universal is the idea amongst primitive peoples that the deities were parts of, not the makers of the world.

"The successive forms Lakhmu and Lakhamu, Sar and Kisar, are represented in some of the lists of the gods as names or manifestations of Anu and Anatu. These lists were compiled at a time when a school of monotheists had risen in Chaldea, and an attempt was made on the part of its adherents to resolve the various deities of the popular creed into forms of 'the one god Anu.'"*

Similarly the writer of Genesis i., following the monotheistic view not only unifies all the gods into One, but strikes out the personifications of nature represented by the above names.

So that instead of that of Sar and Kisar, we have the creation of the atmosphere and clouds in Genesis i. 3.

Again, a suggestion occurs to me that the Hebrew word *Elohim* may perhaps be nothing more than the combination of these Assyrian words *Elum* and *Hea;* such a combination showing itself in the plural termination—*im* in Hebrew; while some probability of this being true seems countenanced

* *l.c.*, p. 61.

by the blessing of Melchizedek, who said: "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, Possessor of Heaven and Earth."*

Monotheism has doubtless issued out of the aggregation or integration of many separate powers, which are conceived ultimately as all belonging to One Power, instead of as many distinct individual deities. So that the plural form, Elohim, may perhaps point to this aggregation. Indeed the word "elohim" is occasionally used in Scripture to indicate the false gods of the heathen, as of the Egyptians,† and in the expression "strange gods."‡

If the ideas I here offer are deemed worthy of the reader's consideration, then the creation of the firmament and the waters above and below it may be called *corrective adaptations* of some similar form of cosmogony as we here possess in the creation of these gods. Future discoveries may, perhaps, throw additional light upon this.

There is a small fragment of a tablet which Mr. Smith places here, as apparently having some reference to the creation of land:—

1. At that time the foundations of the caverns of rock [thou didst make];
2. the foundations of the caverns thou didst call [them] (?).
3. the heaven was named . . . .

---

* Gen. xiv. 19. † Exod. xii. 12. ‡ Gen. xxxv. 2, 4.

Even in this little fragment we have a significant expression, "Thou didst call, . . ." which seems to reappear in the words "The dry land He called earth;" and again, "God called the firmament heaven."

The fifth tablet is much more complete, and treats of the creation of the heavenly bodies, and runs closely parallel to the account of the fourth day of Creation in Genesis.

The tablet begins as follows:—*

1. (Anu) made suitable the mansions of the (seven) great gods.
2. The stars he placed in them; the *lumasi* he fixed.
3. He arranged the year according to the bounds (or signs of the Zodiac, Heb. *mazzaroth*) that he defined.
4. For each of the twelve months three stars he fixed.
5. From the day when the year issues forth unto the close,
6. he established the mansion of the god Nibiru, that they might know their laws (or bonds).
7. That they might not err or deflect at all,
8. the mansion of Bel and Hea he established along with himself.
9. He opened also the great gates in the sides of the world;

* *l.c.*, 64.

10. the bolts he strengthened on the left hand and on the right.
11. In its centre also he made a staircase.
12. The moon-god he caused to beautify the thick night.
13. He appointed him also to hinder (or balance) the night, that the day may be known,
14. (saying): Every month, without break, observe thy circle;
15. at the beginning of the month also, when the night is at its height.
16. (With) the horns thou announcest that the heaven may be known.
17. On the seventh day (thy) circle (begins to) fill,
18. but open in darkness will remain the half on the right (?).
19. At that time the sun (will be) on the horizon of heaven at thy (rising).
20. (Thy form) determine and make a (circle ?).
21. (From hence) return (and) approach the path of the sun.
22. (Then) will darkness return; the sun will change.
23. . . . seek its road.
24. (Rise and) set and judge—judgment.

"The assertion with which the fifth tablet begins may be compared with the oft-repeated statement of Genesis, after each act of creative power, that 'God

saw that it was good.' In fact the difference between the expressions used by the Hebrew and Assyrian writers seems greater than it really is, since the word rendered 'to make suitable' comes from a root, which signifies 'pleasant' or 'agreeable.'"*

With regard to two accounts, the Babylonish is far more strictly astronomical than that of Genesis. And this need not surprise us; apart from the fact that the history, according to Genesis, had not so much the object of giving a minute and detailed account of the Creation as to effect certain *moral* and legislative purposes; we know how greatly astrology, if not astronomy, was studied even in the ages long preceding the probable dates of these tablets. Indeed, this tablet clearly shows that there must have been a very long antecedent period, involving the gradual rise and development of the science of astrology, for this and astronomy were one; and indeed of mathematics as well, for tables of square and cube roots have been discovered.

While in Genesis the creation of the stars is added as an after-thought—"He made the stars also,"—and were evidently thought to be of much less importance than the sun and moon, here they come first and not merely as stars, but already grouped into constellations (line 2), a certain series

* *l.c.*, 67-8.

forming the Zodiac (3), white even rows of stars are marked out (4). These arrange the siderial year (5).

As in the first chapter of Genesis it is said that the heavenly bodies were set for signs and seasons, for days and years, so in the inscription before us "the functions of the stars were, according to the Babylonians, to act not only as regulators of the seasons and the year, but to be also used as signs; for in those ages it was generally believed that the heavenly bodies gave, by their appearance and positions, signs of events which were coming on the earth." *

If any account similar to this occurred in the copy upon which the author of Genesis based his version, he has shown a wise discretion here as elsewhere, in rigidly excising everything that had the slightest appearance of fancy or extravagance: and has kept to bald facts and nothing more. We may, on the other hand, note that line (13), "He appointed him [the Moon] to balance the night," finds its echo in Genesis i. 14, "The lesser light to rule the night." The phases of the moon, which are described in the tablets, disappear from Genesis, possibly as entering too much into detail. After the moon is created, its beauty and perfection are extolled, the regularity of its orbit is alluded to, which led to its being

* *l.c.*, p. 68.

considered the type of a judge and the regulator of the world.

The fact that the stars appear first, then the moon, and lastly the sun, is evidently *adjusted* from the ordinary appearance at night. Eternal darkness is manifestly supposed to have been the condition coeval with chaos; and as first the stars and the moon appear to break the darkness, then Light succeeds before the appearance of the sun itself; so the supposed order of creation has followed the observed succession of night and day. The author of Genesis, however, inverts this, placing the sun first, the moon second, and the stars last; or, as it were, in order of merit, his object being apparently and chiefly to insist upon the fact that God created them, and that they are not themselves spiritual beings; besides he had no object in giving an astronomical account of these heavenly bodies. Moreover our author has again shown his wisdom in relegating to the moon a secondary position to that of the sun.

It may be here observed that there appears, as far as discoveries have hitherto been made, to be nothing in the tablets to account for the creation of light, as in Genesis i. 2, though by analogy we may suppose that there was some similar statement: for it may be remembered that there is nothing surprising in the supposition that Light *per se* has necessarily anything to do with sun-light, for the

following passage clearly shows that in comparatively modern times such an idea could be held, just as it will be found to be so thought by children of to-day. Thus, Ambrose says, "we must recollect that the light of day is one thing, the light of the sun, moon and stars, another; the sun by his rays appearing to add lustre to the daylight. For before the sunrise the day dawns, but is not in full refulgence, for the midday sun adds still further to its splendour."* This idea, too, would seem to be that most plainly conveyed by Genesis:—"And God said, Let there be light, and there was light; and God saw the light that it was good. And God divided the light from the darkness, and God called the *Light* 'Day,' and the *darkness* he called 'Night:' and the evening and the morning were the first day."†

We must now, unfortunately, pass to the seventh tablet‡, as the intermediate portions have not yet been found. It is fragmentary, but runs as follows:—

1. At that time the gods in their assembly created . . .
2. He made suitable the strong monsters . . .
3. They caused to come living creatures . . .
4. cattle of the field, beasts of the field, and creeping things of the field. . . .
5. They fixed for the living creatures . . .

* *Hexæmeron*, lib. iv, cap. 3. † Gen. i. 5. ‡ *l.c.*, p. 71.

6. . . . cattle and creeping things of the city they fixed.
7. . . . the assembly of the creeping things, the whole which were created . . .
8. . . . which is the assembly of my family . . .
9. . . . and the god Nin-si-ku (the Lord of the noble face) joined the two together . . .
10. . . . to the assembly of the creeping things I gave life . . .
11. . . . the seed of Lakhamu I destroyed. . . .

This tablet corresponds with the sixth day of creation in Genesis i. 24, 25 :—"And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

"And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind; and God saw that it was good."

There are one or two points worthy of note in this passage. The expression (in line 2) points to a preceding creation of monsters, which analogy would indicate as marine, and which are referred to in Genesis i. 23, the word "whale" being a mis-translation for "sea-monster." The three kinds of land animals find their exact counterpart in Genesis. The ninth line appears to refer to two beings created with the animals, and here again analogy would lead us to suspect that they are Man and Woman.

"It is curious here," says Mr. Smith, "to notice a tablet which refers to the creation of man. In this, the creation of the human race is given to Hea, and all the references in other inscriptions make this his work;" and "as in Genesis, so in these cuneiform tablets, the Creator is made to speak, and to address the objects which he calls into existence."*

Mr. Smith next placed a lengthy fragment which he supposed to refer to the Fall, but which is now regarded as a hymn addressed to the Creator Hea.† Mr. Sayce thus speaks of it:—"It is evident that this hymn to the Creator emanated from what Sir Henry Rawlinson has termed the monotheistic party among the ancient Babylonians. . . . The various deities of the popular faith are all resolved into the one supreme God, the maker of the world and man, who was worshipped at Babylon under the names of Bel, 'the Lord,' and Merodach the sun-god at Eridu under that of Hea, and at Nipur under that of Anu. The gods of the multitude are said to be only the fifty names of the Creator. To him is ascribed the regulation of the stars, the naming of the angels, and the subjection of the subordinate demigods; and the marginal notes expressly state that the several titles under which the Creator is addressed on the obverse of the tablets all belong to one and the same deity."

* *l.c.*, 72. † *l.c.*, p. 79.

We turn now to Genesis, and we there find that *this* conviction was held by Abraham, who lived possibly at the time the Babylonian tablets, of which Mr. Smith's Assyrian discoveries were copies, were written. Abraham was doubtless familiar with some form or other of these accounts, for he came from this very country where they seem to have had their birth. And it may, in fact, be due to him, that the history of the Creation which has been preserved and handed down in Genesis has retained so many characteristics of its Chaldean origin.

We may then, I think, conclude with a tolerable degree of safety that the first chapter of Genesis is a *revised adaptation* of an early Babylonish account: revised, in that everything that was fanciful or degrading was struck out. Probably also the astrological and astronomical details, even if correct, were repressed as well, and little else than bare facts retained; the word "signs," for instance, pointing to the prevalent belief, of which our adaptor had not quite freed himself. But the most important modification is the new monotheistic dress which it has assumed. The gods who were themselves created, all disappear; but the different phenomena of nature which they were supposed to preside over and rule are now represented as the things themselves—the sky, the sea, the land, the sun and the moon—they too have all issued

from the command of the One Being who created them.

The adaptation to "Days" involves some obscurity. Mr. Smith points out an apparent parallel between the days of Genesis and the number of tablets. If this be real, it would seem that the idea of introducing the word "day" arose from legislative purposes to enforce the observance of the Sabbath, for there is clearly no real connection between tablets and days, and therefore we must look externally for the motive of its adoption.

It appears to be the fact that the earliest observers did not divide the month into weeks of seven days, but into *two halves*. Mr. Procter observes:*— "Max Müller finds no trace of the week in the Vedic literature of the Hindoos, but the month is divided into two parts according to the moon—the *clear* half and the *obscure* half. . . A similar division has been found among the Aztecs." Hence the change from "half-months" to "weeks" is represented in the "Days" of Genesis, which together constitute, so to say, the complete symbolic week.

There are one or two other facts worth mentioning; thus,—"In the popular mythology the part of the Creator was usually assigned to Merodach. Thus we find the latter deity addressed in a mutilated bilingual hymn."† In this occur the lines:—

* *The Great Pyramid*, p. 214.

† *l.c.*, translated on pp. 80, 81.

(11) Merodach, the king of heaven and earth.

(14) heaven and earth are thine,

(16) the charm (to produce) life is thine,

(19) mankind, (even) the men with the black heads,

(20) living creatures, as many as are called by a name, as exist in the land.

"In these references to the names of the living creatures made by the Creator at the beginning of the world, we are irresistibly reminded of the passage where we read that 'out of the ground God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air; and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.' "*

"One of the most curious statements made in these hymns is that the race of men created by the deity was black-headed" . . . and "The discovery that the Biblical Adam is identical with the Assyrian *Adamu* or 'man,' and that the Assyrian *Adamu* goes back to the first-created man of Accadian tradition who belonged to the black, that is to the Accadian race, is due to Sir Henry Rawlinson. He has also suggested that the contrast between the black and the white races, between the Accadian and the Semite, is indicated in the sixth chapter of Genesis, where a contrast is drawn between the daughters of men, or *Adamu*, and the sons of God. It was owing

* Gen. ii. 19.

to the intermarriage of the sons of God with the Adamites that the evils were spread which brought down upon the world the punishment of the Deluge."*

Several points require further elucidation, and much of the Creation of Genesis has not been touched upon, as the tablets corresponding to them have not yet been found. But fragmentary as these are which Mr. Smith and his successors have so skilfully deciphered, they are of immense value to us, as affording a better insight into the probable origin of the first chapter of Genesis than we ever had before.

Enough has been now quoted to prove, I think conclusively, that we cannot claim for the Mosaic accounts in Genesis any independent origin by an express revelation of the history of Creation of the world; but that it must take its place amongst many others; yet that place is a high one, on account of its intrinsic purity from polytheism and all extravagance of description.

Having now considered the earliest views of the cosmogony as discovered in the Assyrian tablets, I will now endeavour to compare the History of the Creation as given in Genesis i. with the latest scientific views of the present day.

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* *l.c.*, p. 83.

CHAPTER II.

CREATION OR EVOLUTION?

(*Continued.*)

"Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee."—*Job* xii. 8.

NUMEROUS have been the successive efforts to harmonize the first chapter of Genesis with advancing science; but Natural Science, as we understand it, could not have existed when that chapter was written; therefore, it would be absurd to expect any exact harmony between them. There is *some* light in the earliest dawn, and the light is in itself identical in essence with the brightness of sun; but as they cannot be otherwise compared, so is it with Genesis and modern Science. Moreover, we must not forget that although the author clearly wished to give the best ideas known to him of the supposed order of God's choosing in the creation, he would seem to have had a further object or moral purpose; such as of establishing a belief in the unity of the Godhead, and that evil does not of itself exist in the creation as God made it, as

well as other matters to which further allusion will be made hereafter.

Bearing these facts in mind, as correctives to any endeavour to trace an exact parallel between Genesis and Science, we must at the same time remember how feeble is the Hebrew language itself, and also how difficult it often is to understand now the exact meaning of the author's words. A few examples will illustrate this. Thus the word *eretz* signifies the Earth in its entirety, or as we say, the Globe; secondly, Land as contrasted with Water; and lastly, any particular country. Again, the word *ruach* may mean the wind, breath, or spirit. Once more, there are three words which signify to create or make, viz., *bara, yatzar, asah,* and it is utterly impossible now to know what shades of meaning they severally implied. Conversely the word *yom* may mean a day or any period, definite or indefinite.* Hence arises insuperable difficulties to our being sure of an exactly correct rendering of the original.

Another thing has long retarded the arriving at a proper interpretation, and that is the mistaken idea

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* Mr. G. Greenwood (*Creation and Modern Science*) observes that it is a misuse of the term to apply to geological epochs such indefiniteness as is implied in the phrase "the day of the Lord's vengeance," or in the sense of a man's acme of success or fame, when we say "in his day," meanings which *yom* may bear in a secondary and abstract sense. See *infra*, p. 54.

that the facts of Science when alluded to in Scripture were literally true; whereas it is now perceived that in most instances *appearances* only are described, the real facts or causes which gave rise to those appearances not being even hinted at, and probably unknown. A most obvious example is the statement of the sun and moon "standing still," a figure of speech analogous to our own, of the sun "rising and setting."

A few centuries ago Natural Science did not exist, and the dictum of the Church was in those days assumed to be necessarily correct; therefore it is not to be wondered at that the Bible was supposed to speak literally infallible truth. But the sciences of geology and astronomy have made gigantic strides during this century, and have re-opened the question of biblical cosmogony; so that it may be now represented, under certain assumptions, as follows:—

If the writer of Genesis was divinely taught or inspired to describe the creation as represented to him by visions or some other method, is modern geology and theoretical cosmogony in harmony with it?

Or we may represent it thus:—

If the first chapter of Genesis be a monotheistic adaptation of a still more ancient cosmogony, and *that*, not divinely imparted, but reasoned out by such scientific light as the men of old possessed,

does modern Science corroborate those notions, or is it in opposition to them?

It is impossible to prove *demonstratively* either assumption to be the real one. At best it can only but little more than an *a priori* probability whichever way we may decide.*

We must take this first chapter of Genesis as it stands, compare it with the latest conclusions of Science, and see if it agree or not. Even if it do agree, it does not necessarily follow that such agreement is at all real, or that resemblances mean the same thing in the mind of the writer of Genesis on the one hand and in the views of modern Science on the other.

In the first place we are at once struck with the extreme brevity of the history of creation, when we think of the universe, the many branches of Natural Science which now exist, and how each branch deals with but a single part of the universe; and which,

* The only scientific, *i.e.*, inductive method of interpretation, is to take this chapter as it stands, endeavour to arrive at its simplest meaning; compare such with the conclusions of modern Science, and *then* only will it be allowable to speculate as to how the writer acquired his knowledge. We *must* abandon the old method of *a priori* assumption, when discussing the nature of inspiration, or indeed interpretation of any kind. It is suicidal to all reasoning to start with the idea that the writer was inspired. We must invert the whole process, *i.e.*, reason from the objective facts as recorded, and then only can we legitimately infer the necessary causes to account for them.

moreover, is itself more than a life-study for one man. Let us take a particular example. It has been calculated that if one naturalist should attempt single-handed to describe the collections brought home by the "Challenger," it would take him upwards of seventy years to do it! What can we think then, of thirty short verses of Scripture as embracing the whole of cosmogony, geology and palæontology to the creation of man?

This chapter of Genesis at most, then, can only be an excessively brief outline which we may epitomize thus:—

Primeval state, watery chaos, and universal darkness.

Day 1.	First stage . .	Light, absolute.
	Second stage .	Light, periodic; *i.e.*, day and night.
„ 2.		Clouds, air, watery sphere.
„ 3.	First stage . .	Land and oceans.
	Second stage .	Vegetation.
„ 4.		Sun, moon and stars.
„ 5.		Marine life and fowl.
„ 6.	First stage . .	Terrestrial animal life.
	Second stage .	Man.

The chief conclusions of modern scientific cosmogony may be summarized as follows:—

Primeval state, homogeneous cosmic vaporous matter, and universal darkness.

Period 1.	First stage .	Light, absolute, due to condensation induced by gravitation.
	Second stage .	Rotation of the spheroidal mass of incandescent vapour.

Period 2.		The mass gradually parts with its heat, liquifies and throws off planets; the planets throw off satellites; the central nucleus forming the sun.
	First stage	. Earth and moon as self-luminous stars.
	Second stage	. Earth and moon become non-luminous bodies.
„ 3.		Gradual evolution of atmosphere, clouds and ocean.
„ 4.		Formation of mountain chains; due to contraction, and secular refrigeration; separation of land from sea.
„ 5.		Appearance of low forms of vegetable life; or perhaps, the "common origin," as an organic living form, of both animals and plants.
„ 6.		The known geological periods.
	First stage	. *Precambrian.* Character of the life unknown.
	Second stage	. *Primary.* At first invertebrate forms only existed; then fishes; then amphibia. These were accompanied by cryptogamic and gymnospermous plants and trees.
	Third stage	. *Secondary.* Great development of reptilian life. Introduction of Birds. Monocotyledonous and dicotyledonous plants.

Fourth stage . *Tertiary.* Great development of terrestrial vertebrates (*Mammalia*).

Fifth stage . *Quarternary.* Introduction of man.

A cursory view of these two appears to show a strong resemblance; but on further examination it will be found partly illusory. It will be best to treat them first in detail, and then see what are the real points of agreement, for there are some, and those too, not unimportant.

Chaos is evidently common to both; but while all the ancient cosmogonies agree in making it *watery*, modern Science regards it as *cosmic vapour:* a difference of detail, but an agreement of fact. With reference to the origin of cosmic matter, nothing is of course known; hence *the pre-existence of matter is assumed* by both the writer of Genesis and by modern Science.

Light is the first result of both, on the commencement of activity in the physical agencies, whatever they were, that began to develope order out of chaos. The cause or origin of light, absolute, is in Genesis attributed to the immediate will of the Creator.* On the other hand, modern scientific cosmogony regards it as the immediate result of the intense evolution of heat, resulting partly from the conden-

* Gen. i. 3, and *supra*, p. 14.

sation of cosmic vapour, and partly from chemical affinities which were brought into play as a secondary result of such condensation. But the centre of force or gravitation *must be assumed to have somehow arisen*. Here is the second unknown element in the process.

In Scripture the light becomes periodic, for day and night are established, again at the direct will of the Creator.

Before, however, it would be possible to attain to this stage in our world, an enormous period of time must have elapsed; however, we may remember that day and night are but effects due to the well-known cause of rotation of the earth upon its axis. And modern Science believes rotation of the cosmic vapour to have been contemporary with gravitation from the very beginning of things: for some of the existing nebulæ, besides having a bright central nucleus, have their luminous matter arranged in spirals. Rotation, however, appears to be a *crux* in all modern cosmic theories, and it is worth while saying a few words on this special point.

It is a well-known principle that two forces acting in directions at right angles to each other have no power of neutralizing or increasing one another. Nor can one force generate such another: though, of course, the two may combine and produce a resultant, just as gravitation together with its tangential force keeps the earth in its orbit. Now,

the attraction of the sun at two points in the earth's orbit acts at right angles to the tangent, *i.e.*, the orbital motion of the earth. Reasoning back from this fact, we may safely conclude that neither force could have arisen out of the other, as Mr. Herbert Spencer appears to endeavour to show.*

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* The author in his essay *On the Nebular Hypothesis* (1863) thus theorizes: "As the cosmic matter condenses under gravitation, some of its atoms will enter chemical union. These will precipitate and aggregate into flocculi (just as water when precipitated from air collects into clouds) floating in the rarer medium from which they were precipitated. . . . Such irregular flocculi will not move in straight lines towards their common centre of gravity, but will be deflected by unequal reactions of the medium. [We may ask parenthetically, why do they not condense *as clouds do*, and *then* come down perpendicularly *as rain does;* and as the iron-clouds or faculæ of the sun apparently rush down the cavernous 'sun spots'?] Hence, they will move obliquely in a spiral, partly in consequence of the accelerated motion, and partly of the resisting medium, ending at last in the centre of gravity. Now each flocculus must give its motion to the rarer medium. The inevitable result must be a rotation of the whole mass of the rarer medium."

The fatal objection to this theory, as it seems to me, is that gravitation causes the flocculi to move towards the centre, but their motion is spiral in consequence of the resistance of the rarer medium, yet *their* momentum, thus acting in a direction at an angular distance less than 90° from that of gravitation upon it, is assumed to transmit a rotatory force to the medium acting at 90° or at right angles to the action of gravity, which is impossible. For, we must remember that gravitation would act on every atom of the medium as well as on the flocculi, for if the medium be

Strauss, in his *Old Faith and New,* cuts the Gordian knot by saying the earth revolved because "rotation is inherent in a sphere," as if any ball will or must always roll of its own accord! Laplace *assumed* it, as we assume gravity; and at present this is all we can do. Science therefore rests with this third assumption.

Whatever the original cosmic vapour was composed of—and as far as existing nebulæ tell us, these appear to retain much the same elements as our earth—when gravitation had overcome the primitive state of repulsion between the cosmic atoms, chemical affinities arose. Whence do they come? At present no cause is known why elements should combine at all. Here then is a fourth assumption, that of a cause or causes which gave rise to chemical unions.

With these four postulates, we can now by known mechanical laws reduce the gaseous sphere

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dense enough to resist the falling in of the flocculi, it must be dense enough to be subject to gravity; hence the resultant of gravitation and the force of the flocculus acting upon any atom of the medium will tend to drive that atom *still more in the direction of the centre of gravity* than was that of the flocculus itself. And what applies to the individual parts applies to the mass. If all the flocculi approach the centre in spirals, the atoms of the medium must do the same; so that the whole—medium and flocculi—will condense more and more by a screw-like motion. Every particle in turn falling in to the ever-increasing central mass in an oblique direction, and *then coming to rest.*

to a fiery molten one surrounded by dense vapours and incandescent gases. The sun appears to supply us with a "living" example of such a state of things. The body is apparently a molten mass covered with brilliant metallic clouds of the vapours of iron, magnesium, &c., and which furnish us with our daily light. Lighter metals and other elements are vapourized still more highly and form the superficial layers external to the visible golden orb; the light of the former is mostly too feeble to be seen in comparison with the brilliant metallic nucleus.

The molten state was the period when rotation, being in excess of gravitation, molten rings were thrown off; these breaking at their weakest point, would coalesce into spheroids revolving on *their* axes, as well as round the central body by the very force acquired from their mother at their birth. This process repeated again and again has—it is supposed—given rise to our planetary system.

If we now confine our attention to our own planet, there was a time when it was thus molten and gave rise to the moon, when both the earth and its satellite were *stars*. Continually radiating its heat into space, the surface would gradually cool, the metallic "sun," which it once was, condensing, the lighter vapours and gases, following in order of density, would give rise to the earth's crust, while the lightest known body, hydrogen, would be one

of the last to settle down into its place. This element uniting with oxygen now forms water. As long, however, as the surface was heated above boiling point, water would remain as vapour; and there is perhaps reason to think that Jupiter may represent this stage at the present time. The vapour would be saturated with saline, carbonic, and other acid matters which had not entered into the crust of the earth. As the earth grew cooler and cooler, the watery vapours would condense on its surface, while the atmosphere would grow clearer and clearer, till it resembled more or less the state with which we are now familiar, probably too, ages before the earth itself was habitable for any kind of living being.

It would seem probable, if not certain, that the author of Genesis i., although following a definite order in the history of creation, alluded only to the most prominent features of the *present visible* universe. For there appears to be nothing mentioned which does not exist now, with one doubtful exception, that of sea-monsters (*tannin*, v. 21), and which possibly referred to some creatures at least *supposed* to have existed. Hence, the most likely interpretation of the "firmament" or "expanse," and of the waters both above and below it, would seem to be the existing atmosphere with its clouds and the waters of the earth below.

Thus far, then, allowing for the extreme brevity

of Genesis, the *order* is the same as that supposed by modern scientific reasoning, and we arrive therefore at the following conclusions. Both the author of Genesis and modern Science suppose a primæval state of chaos in utter darkness, the former considered it watery, the latter regards it as vapour. The first thing produced is believed by both to have been light. But while the immediate, natural, or secondary causes are all hidden from the writer of Genesis, who attributes each step in the Creation to the direct volitional act of the Creator, Science goes deeper into the matter, and endeavours to reason out *how* the effects were produced; and thus with light in Genesis, it is simply as light, independent of the sun, which illumined the watery waste. Science relegates the source of the first appearance of light to the process of condensation of an originally non-luminous cosmic gas or vapour. Hence, there is nothing in common between them, except the abstract *fact* that light was the first issue.

Next, if the evolution of the world be a correct hypothesis, Genesis passes over the "sun" or "star" stage of our earth shining with its own light, and brings us at once to the very last phase of atmospheric differentiation associated with the condensation of watery vapours to constitute an ocean shell. And this latter condition is exactly in accordance with modern cosmic philosophy.

We now pass on to the next stage, when land appeared. Here, again, Genesis and Science are at one; for the latest views of theoretical geology are that mountain ranges became elevated with corresponding depressions forming ocean basins, by the secular refrigeration of the globe with the necessary crumpling of its surface on "the contraction of the heated materials in the interior of the earth," the "wrinklings of the crust thus accommodating itself to the diminished nucleus" (Rev. O. Fisher).

Hitherto, creation has been solely concerned with the inanimate world; but whence came life? It is supposed, if not almost generally assumed, by all who hold the doctrine of Evolution, that organic matter endowed with life has been evolved by natural laws from inorganic matter; but we must carefully remember, however overwhelming is the evidence, and such is undoubtedly the case, for the evolution of known animals and plants, living or extinct, from pre-existing ones, yet, when we try to trace back their history to its origin, the chain ends abruptly a very long way short of its first link! We are in absolute ignorance of every fact connected with the origin of living force or life. Dr. Tyndall, who expressed his belief in the potency of matter to produce it, is himself the latest authority in disproving the spontaneous generation of living organisms from infusions of dead organic matter.

A time there certainly was when life, as we know it now, could not have existed on this planet. It exists now, and it is utterly fruitless in our state of knowledge to make any attempt to bridge over the gap. Strauss, in his hurry to do so, joyfully seized upon *Bathybius*, a supposed amorphous mass of protoplasmic living matter covering in patches the sea-bottom; but Professor Huxley, who at first pronounced it to be living, now acquiesces in the determination that it is only an inorganic precipitate, so that that last straw has broken.

The only objection to the belief in the evolution of life from inorganic matter which I have, is that there is no evidence whatever known at present. Should it be forthcoming, I shall be as ready to accept it as Strauss.

The author of Genesis describes vegetation evidently as he was accustomed to see it: grass, herbs, trees, &c., and if it be asked *why* he introduces it here as the first forms of organic life, the probability is that he perceived that animal life must ultimately depend upon vegetation; for it requires no great perception to see that if animals were *all* carnivorous they must inevitably die out, and that the carnivora for the most part live on the herbivora.

Many harmonists, like the late Hugh Miller, thought that this creation of vegetation represented the profusion of cryptogams or flowerless plants of

the carboniferous or coal-epoch, and that each day was represented to the seer as a panorama in a vision. It is an ingenious idea, but of course has no objective basis of evidence whatever. It seems to me to be simply an epitome of such vegetation as is ordinarily familiar to us, taken to represent the creation of all vegetable life, grass, herbs, and trees being merely a rough classification according to size; just as Solomon is said to have spoken of the cedar and the hyssop as the largest tree and the smallest herb.

If we enter into details, and assume the vegetation described in Genesis as botanically correct, it is utterly incongruous with the facts known about the carboniferous flora, which consisted entirely of cryptogamous or flowerless plants together with gymnosperms; that is to say ferns, gigantic club-mosses, horsetails, and associated probably with trees allied to the fir and yew, "grass,"* being a kind of plant probably unknown at that epoch. As yet no certain evidence of any other flowering plants than gymnosperms has been satisfactorily determined.

The fourth "day" reveals the supposed creation of the sun, moon, and stars. The introduction of these after the preceding creation of light has always

* The so-called *poacites* may perhaps have been a narrow-leafed fern, or the leaves of one the lycopodiaceous trees.

been a stumbling block to interpreters; some of whom have suggested that before that time, *i.e.*, the fourth day, dense vapours may have obscured the sunlight, which vapours with a greater amount of carbonic acid in the atmosphere would account for the prolific growth of flowerless plants of the carboniferous and earlier periods.

One cannot be called upon to prove that such a condition of things *did not* exist; but those who imagine that such *was* the case, ought to give some grounds for maintaining it.

On the other hand, in the preceding chapter, it was shown whence the author of Genesis adopted the idea of the creation of the heavenly bodies on the fourth day.

Light, independent of the sun, seems to have been the original notion; and in the Chaldean account, deciphered by Mr. Smith, although no tablets have yet been discovered which treat of such light created independently, it appeared that a far more elaborate and finished astronomical account was there given, as issuing from the Creator Anu's hands. That of Genesis, however, is a reduction of some similar account to its simplest form. Thus, the adaptor appears to have seen that while the stars themselves were the Creator's work, their arrangement into constellations was of human artifice; and hence there is no allusion to them in Genesis.

The creation, therefore, of the heavenly host, on

the fourth day, I take to be simply an adaptation from a far earlier and primitive account.

The fifth day is devoted to marine life and fowl. The former being expressed by the word *Tannin*, which signifies "sea-monster," translated in the E.V. by "whale."

Nothing is at present known of the creation of marine life in the Chaldean tablets; though, it will be remembered, one line occurs in the tablet which speaks of the creation of terrestrial forms, which appears to allude to it; for the tablet opens as follows:—

1. At that time the gods in their assembly created . . .
2. They made suitable the strong monsters, &c.* . . . .

This belief in the sea producing "monsters" appears to have been general in the different cosmogonies of the ancients. In the Chaldean account, handed down by Berosus, they are very numerous, but seem to have arisen from the original chaotic ocean, supposed to be the source of evil and disorder, and which, therefore, gave rise to extraordinary nondescript creatures, their chief characteristic being the combinations of different animals as well as with man and woman. Perhaps the fish-god Dagon of the Philistines, and the centaurs of the Greeks are later reproductions of the same ideas.

If, then, the account in Genesis be an adaptation

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* See *supra*, p. 15.

from an old Chaldean form, we see here the last lingering element of those extravagant notions in the word *Tannin*, or sea-monsters. The representations of the monsters of Berosus were to be seen in the temple of Belus; and, although the writer knew *they* must have been extravagant human conceptions, he might have had sufficient grounds for believing there had been some real marine creatures of great size, which, being but imperfectly known or described by those who had seen them, gave full play to the imagination of those who had not seen them, just as the Sirenian manatee is well known to have been the origin of the mermaid, or as the crocodile was possibly adopted to signify the dragon of Scripture, often taken to represent the cause of evil.

We may go further and suggest the possibility of some large marine vertebrates having become extinct within the prehistoric times of man, just as the Sirenian *Rhytina borealis* has been exterminated, comparatively lately, near Behring Straits; leaving thus but two known surviving forms of Sirenia, a once widely-extended group.* Or again, as the

* The miocene genus *Halitherium* has left its remains in Europe, and is now extinct. Indeed, no miocene species of vertebrate is living. The modern extant forms of mammalia have, (excepting the Tapir,) widely differentiated from the forms of that epoch. Thus while the *Hipparion* was abundant then, the horse, a lineal descendant of a near ally to it,

Port Jackson shark is now the sole survivor of a vast group of fishes of great variety, and which flourished through many geological epochs. On the other hand, whales, sharks, huge cephalopods or cuttle-fishes, *are* now existing, and quite worthy of being called monsters of the deep, without any exaggeration. If any such creatures be here referred to, it would probably be from report only; and that an exaggerated account of those "that go down to sea in ships . . . and see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep . . . where is that Leviathan whom Thou hast made to play therein; wherein, too, are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts" (Ps. civ. and cvii.).

Besides the creatures of the deep, fowl is created at the same time: "Let fowl fly above the earth, in the open firmament of heaven."

Now, it is not a little remarkable that geology reveals to us a long "reptilian" age, succeeding the carboniferous; the latter period, as well as that which immediately followed it, being characterized by many and large forms of amphibia, which are an intermediate link between fishes and reptiles. Then, again, these amphibia were succeeded by huge marine and terrestrial, and even flying, but all true,

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did not exist. Hence to imagine man, or *Homo*, as he is now, to have existed in the miocene period is irrational; for his ancestor, had one been then living, must have been at least as different from man as Hipparion is from the horse.

reptiles. And although the latter appear to have no real affinity to birds, but only similarly adapted structures, such as their hollow and light bones; yet strong evidence points in the direction of birds having been a direct off-shoot from another branch of reptiles (the *Dinosauria*), which appear to have walked on their hind feet only in a similar manner to birds. So that the mesozoic, or secondary period of geologists may well be called the reptilian if not avian age. And one point must not be forgotten, that while there is but one marine lizard-like reptile (*Amblyrhyncus*, of the Galapogos Islands) now existing, a vast number of species of gigantic size were marine of that epoch.

Whether we are justified in regarding this age as represented by the fifth day of the creation in Genesis is, of course, an open question. It is, however, to say the least, a very remarkable coincidence, both in the *description* as well as in the *order*, and one to which I would especially call the reader's attention.

Another point of great significance lies in the oft repeated use of the imperative mood. It is commonly said that God created by direct acts of His will; but the phraseology will scarcely bear out such an interpretation. God said, "Let there be light" . . . "Let the waters be gathered together" . . . "Let the waters bring forth abundantly," &c. Now, this use of the imperative mood can only imply other

agents than the speaker. Yet we have, as an equivalent, the direct statement that "God created great whales," and I see but one inference: that, although the will of God is justly regarded as the primary and fundamental cause, the effectual carrying out of that will is relegated to unnamed secondary agents, which modern philosophy, labouring under complete ignorance, provisionally calls the "laws of evolution." Indeed, the whole chapter exhibits a profound insight, displayed in the knowledge of the order of the successive steps of creation; while the clearly determined adoption of the use of the imperative, seems to me conclusive that the writer had a strong conviction that a gradual development had taken place; and that such a process was entirely dependent upon the will and almighty power of the Creator.

In a word, this first chapter of Genesis is far more in favour of the doctrine of Evolution, than it is of isolated or special creative acts.

We now come to the last phases of creation; terrestrial life, which contains two periods—the creation of animals, and lastly, that of man.

Geology reveals a long succession of series after series of quadrupeds, the remains of which have been discovered in the so-called Tertiary strata, both in the new and old worlds, coming in and dying out, each replaced by another which in turn developed into the next; till at last the epoch arrived when

man entered upon the scene, and revealed the final cause of the great purpose of creation.

Again, it may be asked if the tertiary and quaternary periods correspond to or are represented by the sixth day of creation; it is, to say the least, not a little remarkable that the order should be so similar, nay, identical. That the successive incomings of the different kinds of mammalia were by "development" or "evolution," is a probability so great as to furnish a moral certainty that such was the case; but, when we come to Man, the case is different. As with the first development of life upon the earth—so with the first appearance of man—what we want is satisfactory evidence. At present, there is absolutely none to prove that man was or could be developed from the lower animals by the same processes as the different members of mammalia were differentiated from a common ancestry. Actual evidence from geology, I repeat, there is none. The grounds used by those who point to evolution pure and simple are well known: and when we limit our view to man's bodily construction, if we knew nothing of his mind and moral nature, the conclusion would inevitably be that he *had* issued out of some common ancestral stock which also gave rise to the Simiadæ, and that, possibly, by a purely "natural" procedure: though even here, some persons see evidences of exceptional processes which they cannot account for on such a supposition. Thus Mr. A. R.

Wallace alludes to the large brain and hairless skin.* When, however, we come to his intellect, the gap between man and the lower orders is so enormous as to be practically infinite; and for this reason, that whereas all animals are for the most part (possibly altogether, according to some naturalists) automatic; man, though he shares automatism largely with other creatures, yet has *volition*, an intelligent self-consciousness; and, as I shall explain in a subsequent chapter,† can thereby distinguish between the "means" and the "end," and so knows right from wrong; and thus becomes the sole moral being upon earth. Now, there is no gradational nor even rudimentary sign of such perception in wild animals. They know not the difference between the means and the end, and, consequently, have no sense of duty excepting, it may be urged, in the case of domesticated animals; but with them, too, it is only through association with their master's stick or other motive. Self-interest and selfishness are one and the same with them, and are purely instinctive, and, therefore, they are perfectly innocent of injustice and are *non-moral*. But with man, however degraded, there lies the germ of improvement. Consciousness, if not conscientiousness, is part of his

* In dealing with the question of man I have entered fully into this subject in a former work.—*Evolution and Religion* (*Macmillan*).

† *Infra*, p. 63.

constitution, and makes him a *man*, and not an animal alone.

Probably all cosmogonies agree in making man to have had exceptional circumstances in his creation. That he is vastly superior in his mental capacities to animals is so obvious, that he is invariably represented as in some way having partaken of the Divine afflatus. It is the converse or a sort of reflex action of the mental process, by which the very conception of God Himself is rendered attainable by the human mind. Man sees vast powers at work in nature, and unifying them into One Great Power, he *projects* his own mental capacities, but in a magnified and intensified degree, upon that conception, and so realizes to his own mind the nature of God; of course I mean apart from revelation. Then, in describing the creation of man, he conversely endows him with those powers, but in a lessened degree, with which he had already invested the Deity. It is a kind of circuitous reasoning, but, nevertheless, it may be a perfectly true representation of the case for all that.

Hence arise the different expressions used, such as "Making man in the image of God;" "Breathing into his nostrils the breath of life;" or, again, the still more material forms of heathen mythology, which represent man as formed from the blood of the gods, &c. All, however, illustrate the same thing, that man, though akin to the beasts that

perish, is yet far removed from them, and is thus the link which joins the creation with its Creator: while his sovereignty is expressed by the command to have dominion over and subdue the earth.

I would here venture to observe that it seems to me to be mere prejudice to feel offended at the notion of man having been developed from the lower animals. Such is an unworthy hindrance to inductive reasoning. If God adopted such a method, who are we that we should complain. The potter hath power over the clay. I believe, with Mr. Darwin, that the evolution of animals and plants was God's method of creation; and, although no palæontological evidence has yet been forthcoming in the nature of a "missing link," I see no reasonable ground for assuming that such may never be found. On the contrary, on physiological grounds there is at least *primâ facie* evidence in favour of his development from animals. Darwin* and Haeckel† have fully discussed the evidence in this direction, and I need not therefore say anything now; but there is one point to which I am not aware of their having alluded; and that is the physical origin of what I take to be the fundamental difference between man and animals, and what I shall fully describe hereafter as the power of entertaining an abstract idea and making such a distinct object of thought.

* *Descent of Man.* † *History of Creation.*

For a certain period of man's life from birth onwards he cannot do this any more than an animal; but a time arrives at last, though it is impossible to place one's finger on the exact date, when his brain has developed sufficiently to enable him to entertain abstract ideas. Reasoning by analogy there is no *à priori* objection to a similar fact having occurred in the evolution of man from some common stock with the ancestry of existing apes. If such was the case we should have a natural origin not only for his body but also for his mind; and there would be no necessity for a direct interference of the Deity, in order to create man; though he would be now able to acquire all those mental qualities which mark him off as so distinct from the brute creation, and which make him akin to heaven.*

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* One chief point of difference between man and animals resides in the formation of the skull. In apes, the temporal depressions are comparatively great to allow of powerful muscles for moving the lower jaw, as the teeth are used as defensive weapons. This use ceases with man. Its depression decreases. This enables the skull to become globular instead of compressed. It forms a greater space internally for the development of the brain, and the increase of its convolutions and grey matter and consequently its functions.

It is possible at least to conceive of some such conditions environing the so-called missing link as would not demand so intense a struggle for existence with other creatures, and which allowed a greater freedom of development in new directions with no requirements of making means for self-

A few concluding words on the moral aims of this first chapter of Genesis:—

It has been already stated that its purport was not only, or perhaps so much, to teach natural science or cosmogony, as to impress firm convictions of a religious character upon the Israelites. Such were, apparently, as follows:—

1.—That there is one Personal God, and not many Gods, and that He alone was the Creator and preserver of all things. If, as I have supposed, the Hebrew cosmogony is an adaptation from a Chaldean account, then the only relic of the polytheism of that source is seen, perhaps, in the word *Elohim*, a collective and plural term; and which, possibly, is a combination of *Elu* and *Hea* with the

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defence so pronounced as in wild animals generally. I would add, here, that it has always seemed to me that the theory of natural selection was misapplied by Darwin in drawing an analogy between artificial selection of man in making new breeds and natural selection in bringing in new species by the result of the "survival of the fittest." I should feel more inclined to attribute the origin of "survivals," *i.e.*, the remnants of a long line of ancestry which have died out, to such a struggle, and not new "species." First, because different species are mostly found in different localities, and therefore where they are at least free from any severe struggle with their kith and kin, the struggle with other plants or animals not of the same kind being much less intense; and secondly, when man selects plants and animals, he strictly forbids any struggle, and places them in conditions the very reverse of those supposed capable of giving rise to new varieties in nature.

Hebrew plural termination, but now used for the One God. Similarly the words "Let us"—seem to indicate a similar origin.*

2.—That the universe was not of an eternal existence; that a time was when it did not exist; that it had a beginning, was created, and, therefore, is not self-existent. On the other hand, the origin of crude matter, "cosmic vapour" of modern Science, is unknown.

3.—That the creation was a continuous process on a grand system of development—step by step—"day" by "day"—and not the result of a single and instantaneous act, or by a series of such acts.

4.—That the inorganic world was first brought into order; then the organic; and of the latter, first the vegetable, then the animal kingdom; and that the latter culminated with the creation of man, in at least one human pair.

5.—That perhaps some exceptional circumstances occurred in the creation of man, whereby he became distinct from the rest of the creation, and was made "in the likeness of God," whereby he—and he alone—incurred moral responsibility.

6.—That all that God had made was "very good," thereby denying by implication that "matter" was essentially "evil."

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* To detect an intimation of the Trinity here, seems to me to be a great anachronism.

7.—That natural law prevails throughout the universe, in that order and harmony have been brought out of chaos by the divine power of the Almighty: and that this has been throughout (man, perhaps, alone excepted) by secondary agents; in other words, by the processes of evolution.

8.—That, if the seven-days week existed before this chapter was penned, then the plan here adopted, whether by revelation or not, *consecrates* that period for ever, for the use of man: while ages of experience have proved that six days of work, and one of rest, is the best arrangement known.*

And now we are in a better position to ask, or have more ground for seeking an answer to the question: Whence arose in the mind of the penman these truths, which we, at this late age of the world, find to be so consonant with modern Science?

I fully agree, and cannot but think the reader will also agree with Dr. Colenso, when he replies to this question thus:—"The Divine Spirit alone can have quickened such thoughts as these in the mind of the Elohist, whether he be Moses himself, or whether some one else adapted, by God's assistance, an old tradition which existed long before his time, and which has travelled westerly with the dispersion of the nations."

* See a full discussion on the seven-days week by Mr. Proctor, in *Our Place among Infinities*, pp. 291, seqq. and *The Great Pyramid*, p. 201.

In either case, we come to the conclusion that this wonderful account partakes of the nature of inspiration: for it breathes throughout nothing but a divine spirit in the moral truths it inculcates, as well as in the startling and correct details in the order of development of the phenomena of the world.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT WAS THE FALL?

"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." —*Gen.* iii. 6.

MAN having been created, the first important fact we read of him in Genesis is the temptation in the Garden of Eden* and his Fall. The verse quoted as the heading of this chapter records the former and the consequences of this act are usually designated as The Fall of Man.

What was the Fall?

St. Paul in endeavouring to draw out an analogy between Adam and Christ writes to the Romans

* I do not pause to discuss the details of the *two* accounts of the Creation, viz., the Elohistic of Gen. i. 1—ii. 3, and the Jehovistic, from Gen. ii. 4-25; as it would be foreign to my object in view. I will only state that the second account is now regarded by scholars as unhistorical and apparently a primitive myth, "localized" within the valley of the Euphrates. I would refer the reader to *The Chaldean Account of Genesis*, by George Smith, revised by A. H. Sayce (1880), p. 84.

as follows:—"As through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned."* He repeats this to the Corinthians:—"Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."†

Let us carefully consider the account in Genesis, and St. Paul's reasoning upon it. It is not spiritual death of the soul as a consequence of sin, which the Apostle is here speaking of, though this may underlie his argument; but it is the physical death of the body which he specially signifies in these passages and which he regards as a direct consequence of the transgression of Adam. Is this true? In Genesis we read‡—"The Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day§ thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

* Rom. v. 12. † 1 Cor. xv. 20-22. ‡ Gen. ii. 16, 17.

§ If it be suggested that the word "day" here covers the indefinite period of a man's life, and not necessarily the self-same day on which the forbidden fruit was eaten; the reply is, first, that such an idea is an afterthought read into the text in Genesis to support St. Paul's argument and make it consistent with the former: secondly, if we look for the meaning of the word "day" wherever it occurs in Genesis

Now was this threat executed? The Serpent had said unto the woman, "Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."* Adam and Eve did eat of the fruit of the tree: and if the account be historically accurate, the Serpent must have spoken the truth, for neither did Adam nor Eve die on the day they ate the forbidden fruit; but Adam, at least, lived nine hundred and thirty years afterwards and begat sons and daughters.† Hence, according to the account, the Serpent appears to have known beforehand that the threat of the Lord God would not be executed. But even supposing that Adam's death was due to his transgression which he had committed nine hundred and thirty years before he died, it cannot logically be concluded from Genesis that his sons and daughters and all their descendants died in consequence of it as well. Nothing whatever is said of such a terrible result in Genesis.

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previously to this passage, it will be found to refer to a particular day (excepting, perhaps, Gen. ii. 4). Moreover (assuming the historical accuracy of the account) it is not easy to see the consistency of the story, if we suppose Adam to have known of such a *secondary* and *abstract* meaning of the word; for such a sense can only be accounted for on the principles of the development of language, which could not have taken place with him. This, therefore, I take to be one of the "proofs" that the account is not historical.

* Gen. iii. 4, 5. † Gen. v. 4.

Moreover, such a decree would have been in direct contradiction to what the Lord God has declared by His prophet Ezekiel. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son:"* nevertheless, we find that St. Paul regards the death of all "them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression" (since "death," he adds, "reigned from Adam until Moses")† as a direct consequence of his transgression.

Moreover, there is no indication in Genesis whatever that Adam would not have died, even if he had not sinned. A threat of the punishment of death on committing a certain crime, as of murder in our own laws, does not of itself imply a previous condition of immortality. Such, however, would seem to be inferred from St. Paul's argument, but it is not discoverable in Genesis. In fact, the contrary would seem to be implied, that man was not by nature immortal, unless he should eat of the tree of life, which would make him so, even after having eaten of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.‡ But St. Paul says:—"As through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned."§ The fact is, however, that St. Paul's

* Ez. xviii. 20.
† Rom. v. 14.
‡ Gen. iii. 22.
§ Rom. v. 12.

reasoning on this subject will not for a moment stand before a rigid logical analysis. His argument seems to be this:—Adam transgressed a direct command. Such transgression is called in Greek *παράβασις*. Sin thus entered into the world, and Death "the wages of sin" he *assumes* to have been the result. Now death reigned from Adam to Moses, *because* (we might as well reason otherwise and say *therefore*) all have sinned. But they sinned without knowing it, as there was no law to forbid them. Such sin is called *ἁμαρτία*. We may ask, therefore, on what grounds does the Apostle assume death to be the wages of unconscious or unimputed sin, *i.e.* *ἁμαρτία*, as well as of a conscious transgression of a known law, *i.e.* *παράβασις*?*

The simple truth is that we have no evidence

* It is worth while remembering, as Prof. W. Robertson Smith has pointed out, that just as *ἁμαρτία* meant "missing one's aim" and never embraced the notion of sin against God in our modern sense of the term, so was it in the earlier times of Jewish history. "The fundamental meaning of the Hebrew word *hātā* is 'to be at fault,' and in Hebrew, as in Arabic, the active (causative) form has the sense of missing the mark (Judges xx. 16), or other object aimed at." . . . Hence "sin is not necessarily thought of as offence against God . . . the notion of sin has no necessary reference to the conscience of the sinner, it does not necessarily involve moral guilt, but only, so to speak, forensic liability. The lively sense of Jehovah's presence in Israel as a king, who issues commands to His people and does not fail to enforce them, gives prominence to the conception of sins against Jehovah." (*The Prophets of Israel*, p. 103.)

whatever that St. Paul was so inspired as to render his logic infallible. It is a fact of the utmost importance to understand this clearly; for the generally received idea seems to be that the Apostles were infallible on every subject and in any argument they had occasion to make. Nothing could be further from the facts of the case. What St. Paul received by Divine revelation (and considering his antecedents it is impossible to conceive of his obtaining his knowledge elsewhere or from human sources alone) was that God had reconciled Jew and Gentile so as to constitute them together to be one great human family on earth;* and that they were both reconciled to God the Father, by a living spiritual union with Jesus Christ, who was the express image of that Father, "in Whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses . . . having made known unto us the mystery of His will."† In other words, the revelation made to St. Paul was firstly a full apprehension of the Divine Person of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, through Whom was forgiveness of sins; and secondly the formation of the Catholic Church by the union of all mankind unto one brotherhood of God. This constituted the Apostle's revelation and was the subject of his preaching.‡

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* Eph. iii. 1-13. † Eph. i. 7-14.

‡ See *e.g.*, Eph. iii. 1-13, 1 Cor. ii. 2, and Col. i. 24-29; and compare Acts xxiii. 11.

But when he brings his own unassisted reason to aid him in expounding this revelation, and quotes the Scriptures of the Old Testament to illustrate his analogies, we find he does not always surpass the logic of the period. He uses arguments which at that time were doubtless acceptable and accepted as perfectly sound by his readers, but, I repeat, they will not always stand a rigid analytical investigation on strictly logical principles.*

Such is it in this case. The generally accepted belief that physical death in man was a consequence of Adam's sin is based on St. Paul's reasoning, which is most unquestionably unsound.

When we go back to Genesis, on which he raises this argument of analogy, we find no basis whatever for such an argument. The Apostle wants to show that as in Christ all shall be made alive (and that a resurrection of man will follow in consequence of Our Lord having risen is another instance of his assuming what in itself has no logical foundation) so, he says, in Adam all died; and he simply assumes death to have resulted from Adam's transgressions, solely because God threatened it should follow *on the same day* as that on which the forbidden fruit was eaten, while he seems to have

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* The reader will find this fact fully discussed by Prebendary C. A. Row, in his *Revelation and Modern Theology Contrasted*, chap. vi, pp. 116 *seqq*.

overlooked the fact that the threat was not put in force.

Modern science furnishes an additional argument, of which St. Paul could have known nothing. If we trace the history of life back to the very earliest ages possible, death has ever reigned throughout. No creature by its very constitution is framed to live beyond a comparatively limited number of years. Man's body forms no exception to this universal law. It is constituted on identically the same principles as those of all other vertebrates. The same kind of machinery sustains life in him as in all others, as long as it can, but the works wear out in time, and death then inevitably ensues.

The conclusion forced upon us is that death is and ever has been as much the lot of man as of animals, and that the account in Genesis of the so-called Fall, as also that of the creation of Adam and Eve, has no actual historical foundation whatever. I think we may safely recognize it as one of the innumerable primitive myths invented to account for the existence of moral evil—evil which cannot but impress itself upon the least observant of men, and it is one of the well-nigh universal attempts of childlike and primitive races to invent stories to explain the origin of the existing phenomena of the world about them.

The existence of moral evil is manifest. We read in Genesis that "God saw that the wickedness of

man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* Whoever wrote those words clearly saw it himself, and history discloses corruption in every nation and in every age until to-day, and probably the Roman and Grecian worlds at the time of Our Lord's coming were the most corrupt ever known.

It is this depravity, so common in man, which the primitive historian wanted to account for. The writer, as was inevitable, looked externally for the cause. He had not the divine instinct of the Son of Man to say "The things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart, and they defile the man."† He found the Serpent already an object of worship as a source of evil, and naturally made it the originator of the suggestion of disobedience.

Now let us observe an important fact. The tree which brought all this woe upon man was a tree of knowledge of good and evil. What does that mean? St. Paul says man had not known sin but by the law. If therefore by eating this fruit Adam became conscious of sin—and the effect of shame certainly implies it—it was a means of awakening conscience, which before the transgression was not known to exist, simply because innocent ignorance was in

* Gen. vi. 5. † Matt. xv. 18.

its place, just as in untaught children of to-day. Hence the eating the fruit was equivalent to the acquisition of a knowledge of law, and the whole story is in every detail a primitive method of expressing the discovery of conscience. Imagine two little children in a garden with fruit about them. They are told not to touch it, but they cannot resist the temptation. They eat it and are found out. For the first time in their lives they feel ashamed of themselves, and very probably would be sent out of the garden.

Hence the story is, I repeat, simply a childlike representation of the discovery of conscience which makes itself felt on a conscious disobedience of law, human or divine. What particularly shows the general belief in the connection between knowledge and evil is the fact that besides being the supposed author of evil, the Serpent was considered as the symbol of wisdom. This combination of knowledge and evil in man, symbolically represented by the Serpent, seems to have been in some way intuitively felt by primitive man, but only definitely manifested on the promulgation of law, as St. Paul says "I had not known sin except through the law."* Hence Our Lord said "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves,"† while St. Paul says to the Romans "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and

* Rom. vii. 7. † Matt. x. 16.

simple unto that which is evil. And the God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."*

Let us see now if we cannot find a more scientific explanation of the origin of moral evil, and more in accordance with known psychological facts of the human mind. My belief then is that the origin of moral evil was simply the conscious abuse of *means*, instead of using them solely for the *ends* or purposes which they have in the constitution of man.

Now this issues out of the fact that man alone of all animals can make an abstraction an object of thought.

Let me illustrate my meaning. There is no reason, *e.g.*, to suppose that any animal in the wild or natural condition ever eats except when it is hungry; and as soon as the instinct of hunger is satisfied it ceases to do so. It undoubtedly derives a certain amount of pleasure from the act of eating. So far man may do the same, but here enters the sharp line of distinction between him and them, and upon which his whole moral nature hinges; a moral nature which no other being can acquire. He alone can think of or make the abstract idea of *Pleasure* an actual object of thought. He can remember and estimate the pleasure of eating, as an abstract idea superadded to the recollection of the physical act of eating. He can, in a word, convert the pleasure

* Rom. xvi. 19, 20.

of eating into an *end,* instead of eating with the natural motive of nourishing his body. He can thus abuse that gift of nature, the pleasure which accompanies eating, and even live to eat, instead of eat to live. Such is the glutton, the epicure or gourmand. I do not mean to say one should *never* eat anything simply for the pleasure of eating, but it is the *abuse of this pleasure* which constitutes the moral evil or the vice.

The reader will now at once see that the same may hold good of drinking, of sloth and idleness, which are the abuse of rest, requisite for both body and mind, and of worse vices which I need not mention.

If we ask ourselves what constitutes the lusts of the flesh, the answer is—they are simply abuses of sensations. But our only sources of sensations are our five senses. We may practically put on one side those of seeing, hearing and smelling, and there remain but two. These two, like the other three, have obviously definite purposes in nature's economy. Animals effect those purposes by obeying their natural instincts, and cannot transgress them, because, I repeat, they cannot rise to "the knowledge of good and evil," or become conscious of the abstract idea of the pleasure apart from the act. They are thus safe from falling, have no moral responsibility, and are simply non-moral beings.

Man alone can fall. While this power of making

an abstraction an object of thought enables him to have distinct and articulate speech, every word of which is an abstraction but conveys a meaning from himself to his hearer, and thereby enables him to outstrip to an indefinite degree all powers of reason and instinct in animals; enables him to grasp the principles of moral law; enables him to realize the existence of a God; yet on the other hand if this gift be abused it will sink him to a level far below that of the brute creation. So that while man alone can be a morally responsible being, and therefore moral, or alas! immoral, animals can be neither one nor the other, but are simply non-moral, and are compelled to remain mentally on one dead level of non-morality and sinlessness.

Such, then, I offer for the reader's consideration, as what appears to me to be a simple, natural explanation of the origin of moral evil, as far as the lusts of the flesh are concerned.

But we may obviously extend it to sins against our fellow-men. Anger, for example, in animals is a non-moral instinct required for self-defence. It is only with man—and with him too, only when he has reached a comparatively high state of moral thought—that he thinks of the abstract ideas of justice, mercy, duty, and love, which should compel him to restrain his anger: and on the other hand, of the wrongfulness of revenge, cruelty, malice, strife, variance and anger of all kinds. It is, in

fact, only when a man has attained to the full measure of the stature of Christ that he can completely realize the iniquity of anger as shown in a moral being. "I say unto you that every one who is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment."*

Let us take another instance, Theft. Beginning with animals, the law of self-preservation is paramount. Might is everything, and any animal will rob another of its prey, if it wants it and has strength or skill to do it. This is non-moral behaviour.

Similarly with savages. "Every man's hand is against every man's." Might here rules as before. The first moral step is acquired when the very simple abstract idea "Mine" can be made an object of thought, and is applied to "What I can keep, *if I can.*" This is co-related with "Yours, *if you can keep it.*" The next stage in abstraction is "Mine by *right* of might," which is likewise co-related with "Yours by *right* of might." The third stage would be "You have no right to mine" co-related with "I have no right to yours." At this stage Theft becomes criminal, for a Moral Law has been evolved.

Such a development of abstract ideas finally becomes formulated as a necessary result of experience into the social law, "Thou shalt not steal."

The reader will now see how that as soon as an

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* Matt. v. 22.

abstract idea can be made an object of thought, the conscious abuse of *means* by converting them into *ends* becomes possible; and how the same principle will apply to all our faculties bodily and intellectual alike, besides those instincts to which I have alluded. Thus I gave no illustration for the sense of sight; but we can at once recall our Lord's remark: "I say unto you that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."*

Again, honest or honourable ambition, or a high aim to strive after all that is good and noble, or the carrying out the injunction:—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might"† is in every way commendable; but ambition may take the form of selfish aggrandisement; and history has only too faithfully recorded such an abuse in the many evil rulers of the world.

Again, how often is it that men are endowed with what in general terms is called great cleverness, which if directed into honourable channels would raise them to pinnacles of fame and honour. On the other hand how often are their talents misdirected in pursuing some dishonourable calling, as coining base money, or an elaborate system of swindling. Genius often goes wrong. Poetical talents, as of Byron, or those of a brilliant novelist can be

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* Matt. v. 28. † Eccles. ix. 10.

prostituted to pander to vice instead of producing healthy and ennobling literature. Political talents of the highest order are too often abused. If they be not imbued with the great Christian principle of *ἀγάπη* or Love, they will be misdirected into party purposes and selfish ends instead of the welfare of the community at large, *the sole end of a true political life.*

We could not, perhaps, have a better illustration of the vicious habit of converting means into ends than what may be seen in the history of Legalism. It was this which was so strongly and unsparingly condemned by our Lord in the Scribes and Pharisees.

Perhaps it would be as well here to show first the connection between Law and my theory of the power of making an abstract idea an object of thought being the rationale of sin.

We speak of Natural Law, and thereby all that is meant is an observed order of facts or *What is.* We frame social, penal and other laws and there is what we call moral law. Such are to make men what they *ought to be.* If men were like animals, non-moral, they could only follow natural laws as they do. But since they can abuse means, and often persist in doing so, experience finds it necessary to restrain them, and laws are framed to effect this. But in proportion as men act in accordance with law, so does it become obsolete and unnecessary and "natural," that is to say men *are* what they *ought*

to be; but until such a state is arrived at Law is a restraint.

With domestic animals we curb any natural and non-moral propensities which happen to annoy us by corporal restraints or objective inflictions of some kind until their automatic habits respond to our desires. But with man it is different. Except in childhood and early youth, when the automatic habits are stronger than the volitional and their will is not yet sufficiently developed to enable them to restrain their own automatic inclinations, we can appeal to other than bodily sensations as motives for obedience. Hence become established Laws of various kinds, social, moral, &c. Their purport in every case is to keep men within those bounds which nature has prescribed as most conducive to the happiness of the community and of the individual; and which experience has proved to be so.

But even Law itself can be abused.

"The Law" says St. Paul "is holy and the commandment holy and righteous . . and spiritual:"* but as soon as the law is served *simply for its own sake*, and not with reference to the object of all law —the good of man—then it becomes a burden and "a curse." Such were the ceremonial observances of the Scribes and Pharisees, and such has been the tendency to an almost worship of the Sabbath in this country.

* Rom. vii. 12, 14.

St. Paul thus describes the Jews, showing how there were "Jews and Jews." "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God."* He then concludes by saying that he and all who accept salvation are freed from the tyranny of the law, "But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were holden; so that we serve in newness of the spirit and not in oldness of the letter."†

How the law, therefore, came to be the tyrannous thing it was in our Lord's day we clearly learn from the history of the Scribes and Pharisees. Mr. W. Robertson Smith has described how they formed a "system of rules applying the Pentateuchal law to every case of practice and every detail of life, thinking that by not merely observing but *developing*, especially the ceremonial precepts of the law, thereby to regain God's favour; so that when by this means Israel had become a law-obeying nation in the fullest sense of the word, Jehovah Himself in His righteousness would intervene, miraculously remove the scourge [the yoke of a foreign power] and establish the glory of His law-fulfilling people."‡ It is this

* Rom. ii. 28, 29. † Rom. vii. 6.

‡ *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, pp. 58, 59.

to which St. Paul alludes in his Epistle to the Romans* when he says that Israel following after the law of righteousness did not attain to it.

Such, then, are illustrations of the abuse of means, by converting them into ends; and such I believe issues out of that power of making an abstraction an object of thought; and this I take to be the origin of moral evil: and I think it is in strict accordance with our Lord's descriptions which I have quoted, and with St. James' observation:—"Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by *his own lust*, and enticed. Then the lust when it hath conceived, beareth sin; and the sin when it is full grown bringeth forth death."†

We find no necessity for a Serpent or a Satan to tempt us from without. The power to pursue pleasure as an end, and the consciousness of good and evil, *i.e.* of law, whether within or without, are quite sufficient to bring about all the moral evil that exists or has ever existed in the world. One great practical lesson issuing out of this knowledge is that we must never try to cast the blame elsewhere than on ourselves if we receive the due reward of our transgressions. No doubt others may tempt us to go wrong; but *if* we do, it is and can only be our own fault if we suffer for so doing. For we are assured that "There hath no temptation

* Rom. ix. 31; x. 3. † James i. 14, 15.

taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it."*

If we be weak and frail will not God give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? And let us remember that "We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but One that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need."†

Now follows another most serious fact. It is only within the latest and most advanced stages of our knowledge of the physiological laws which govern the bodily constitution of man that the full significance of hereditary influences and diseases has become realized. The health, character, and acts of parents have the strongest tendencies to be reproduced in their offspring. Not only are the consequences of the sins of the fathers visited upon the children, in that, for example, a drunkard only too often has idiot sons, but that if they be not in an asylum it is more than probable that they will be drunkards too. Similarly a lustful or

* 1 Cor. x. 13. † Heb. iv. 15, 16.

diseased man will see himself reproduced in his offspring.

These undoubted facts open out to all persons who will receive it a new view of the awful moral responsibilities resting upon us; especially on all adults who contemplate entering the state of wedlock. This, however, is a subject which I cannot pursue further: but would leave these very brief remarks with the earnest prayer that all will bear in mind that Original or Birth Disease is an indubitable fact in God's laws of nature, and will realize the moral responsibility which rests upon us accordingly.

Now what we are to understand by the term "Original or Birth Sin," which besides death is usually regarded as the result of the Fall of Adam and Eve. Is there such a thing at all? If there is, what is the real interpretation of it? *There is;* and I think it may be regarded or described as the inherited tendency to evil through the accumulated vice of ages. As soon as man realized in his mind the abstract ideas of pleasure, anger, revenge and so forth, and pursued unremittingly those acts which engendered pleasure and the like, solely for their sakes and irrespective of the underlying "use" which nature had intended by those instincts of the senses and the intellect, then slowly and by degrees the craving for the pursuit crept steadily on, and at the same time slowly but surely followed

the degradation of mind and body, not only in the individual himself, but in his progeny; aye, and not only to the third and fourth generation of them that thus "hate God," but indefinitely onwards. Nature tries hard to bear the extra burden put upon her by the drunkard and debauchee; she gives timely hints of the dangers looming in the distance—timely warnings by increased feebleness and pain, as well as otherwise appeals gently to her tyrant to cease from the unnatural labour thrust upon her powers, and incessant calls upon her resources. But the glutton, the drunkard, and the vicious heed her not, till they find nature can hold out no longer. A collapse follows, and physical ruin is the result. But alas! the mind is too intimately connected with the body to go scatheless. It becomes vitiated too, and spiritual death, a death of the soul to all sense of purity, truth and love inevitably follows.

What thus happens to the father is more or less certain to accrue to the son.

Such I take to be the true and scientific interpretation of what is called Original or Birth Sin.

The writer of the ninth article of our religion rather implies than distinctly asserts that Original or Birth Sin, as it is called, was due to Adam; for he says "It is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam:" but it matters little

who began it. The first man who was capable of realizing good and evil became capable of sinning, and every one now is liable to trespass the moment he is old enough to become conscious of the possibility of the abuse or disobedience of law.

Sin is due to two sources, either to hereditary influences (original sin) or to an innate source within each human being, and proper to him; for since all men are constructed alike, if the first man could "be led away of his own lusts and enticed," so could the latest born into the world.

If it be thought by some that it is necessary to hold the ecclesiastical view of original sin to account for the (supposed) fact that all men have sinned; the necessity of such a source of sin disappears when we reflect that every man has in himself, as much as Adam, the power of entertaining an abstract idea as an object of thought, which, as I have explained, I believe to be the *fons et origo mali.*

The preceding argument may appear to be somewhat opposed to what our Lord said about the receiving of stripes. "That servant, which knew his Lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with *many* stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with *few* stripes."*

The first may be regarded as those who know

* Luke xii. 47, 48.

the law and do not obey it. They are clearly morally responsible and will suffer according to their conscious violation of law. But with regard to the latter, it would seem at first sight they must be irresponsible: but it is not entirely so, though *degrees* of culpability must be admitted according to a man's opportunities. For two classes of reasons may such receive "stripes." "A burnt child dreads the fire." There is one form of stripe, *i.e.* natural law executing its own judgments. But there is another, namely, when men have the opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the nature of God and God's laws and neglect to do it. There can be a culpable negligence in remaining ignorant as well as impossibility of knowing better. The former are such as those described by St. Paul as being without excuse;* but on the other hand he told the Athenians that there were times of ignorance which "God overlooked."† Dives found himself in torments because he, like his brethren, had Moses and the prophets but had neglected to hear them.

We thus see on the one hand how a man is morally responsible for the exercise and right use of his knowledge of good and evil; on the other that he must be careful lest by a wrongful *omission* of learning what is required of him to do as a moral agent, he find swift retribution—stripes, few or many—fall

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* Rom. i. 18-23. † Acts xvii. 30.

upon him. Neglecting to learn, when he had the means and opportunity of learning his duty, as well as the violation of law, whether natural or revealed, is sin; while its hereditary effects constitute that proneness to evil which is in the heart of man and which is called in the language of ecclesiastical writers, Original or Birth Sin.

I have now answered the question with which I began this chapter—What was the Fall? And my answer is that primitive man, fully alive to the presence of moral evil in the human race, invented the story in Genesis to account for it. The source of temptation is placed outside instead of within the heart; while the result of eating the forbidden fruit pictures the awakening of conscience. St. Paul in drawing an analogy between Adam and Christ makes the mistake of supposing death, which had been a universal law of nature through all ages of the world, to have first accrued to man through sin; and that inasmuch as all human beings have died since Adam, he therefore concludes that it must have been in consequence of Adam's particular transgression. However readily the analogy might have been accepted by his readers, science, philosophy, and religion prove that it is no longer tenable; even if it were true of the spiritual death of the soul—with which subject we are not now specially concerned—it certainly is not true of the death of the body.

The practical issue of this question is that we all have a distinct moral responsibility, for we all know good from evil: and although we are born into the world more or less heavily weighted by the effects of the iniquities of our forefathers, or Original Sin, we have a source of infinite spiritual strength, if we will but seek for it from God on high, Who will enable us to resist all temptations which arise in our hearts; till, by not complying with the cravings of the flesh, they will gradually cease to trouble us. The warfare will be accomplished under Christ's banner, the victory through Him will be won, and we shall become children of God, "perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect"* and "cannot sin," because we are "begotten of God." †

Having thus endeavoured to interpret the Fall of Man as recorded in Genesis; the next points to be considered are the supposed consequences of that fall, or the "curses" stated as having been pronounced by the Lord God.

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* Matt. v. 48. † 1 John iii. 9.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT WAS THE CURSE?

"And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee: and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."—*Gen.* iii. 14-19.

THIS passage recounts what is usually called the Curse, and it would seem to have fallen directly on the serpent, the woman, and the ground; and indirectly on the man. With regard to the serpent, the Lord God said unto it—"Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle and above

every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."* Then there is pronounced perpetual enmity and warfare between the serpent-race and mankind; but that while man tries to crush the serpent's head, he cannot do so without receiving a retaliating bite. Secondly, as touching the woman, sorrow in child-birth is pronounced to be her lot, coupled with submission to the rule of her husband. Lastly, the ground is cursed by bearing thorns and thistles; and as a consequence there follows increased labour to man, who can henceforth only eat bread by the sweat of his brow and in sorrow all the days of his life.

The question we have to ask is, Are these things really objective curses, pronounced by the Lord God and historically true; or are they ideal representations made by primitive man endeavouring to account for existing phenomena? I think there is not a shadow of doubt but that the latter is the real truth. To state facts as briefly as possible: serpents have always moved as now, long before man was created. It was a mistaken observation to suppose that they licked or ate the dust. The enmity between serpents and men has existed from time immemorial, and most probably many ages before before Genesis was written. The "sorrow of child-

* Gen. iii. 14.

birth" peculiar to women is partly due to physiological causes issuing from her erect position, but is to be still more attributed to artificial habits of life. The submission to husbands is universal with uncivilized peoples, because might is the sole gauge of power, and all women, as also children, are regarded as chattels to be bought and sold. Labour in all hot countries of the East is regarded as a burden, luxurious idleness being supposed to be the mark of dignity and rank.

Now just as I have endeavoured in the last chapter to show that the supposed Fall of Man was a mythological attempt to account for the existing depravity of the human race; so by the idea of a curse the primitive annalist, recognizing the above facts as universally true, tries to account for them; and the curses are his inventions to give a substantial origin, such as he thinks adequate, to explain how they came about. Let us enter a little more into detail with regard to these supposed curses, and we shall soon see that the idea of such is entirely *subjective* and not *objective* at all; that is to say, that though (*e.g.*) there is no real curse on the serpent, yet for certain reasons man has come to hate it, and he was led to suppose that there must be something evil in the animal itself; whereas the source of the curse is really in his own mind.

A knowledge of the anatomy of serpents and of their geological history at once sets at rest all doubt

upon the point. They have wonderful and beautiful adaptations for their own peculiar manner of life, which are not to be surpassed by those of other animals. Nature has even caused certain lizards, which do not belong to the proper family of snakes at all, to adopt the same method of progression.* The compensating powers it possesses for the absence of limbs are marvellously exquisite, while the rapidity of motion is very great. Those provided with poisonous fangs have a most admirable method of catching and swiftly killing their prey. The action of the poison on the latter is so extraordinarily rapid that there is mercy in its very death. The idea of a serpent licking or eating the dust is simply a popular misapprehension from inaccurate observation, just as the chameleon was thought to live upon air. Wherein then lies the idea of a curse? Why the hatred and enmity of man? It evidently arose from the power of inflicting death which many serpents possess. Perhaps the fascinating influence which renders its prey impotent to stir, and so makes it an easy victim, may have something to do with the general horror of the serpent race; while its stealthy habit and unsuspected way of coming upon a man unawares may also have conspired to strike terror at the sight of a snake in his path. Hence in his heart he may have cursed

* As the common "slowworm."

serpents, and so, as it were, transferred his curse to God, and thought that it was the Creator that did it. But when we try to look at the habits and structure of serpents from *their* point of view, we find that these things are the reverse of curses to the creature itself: while the very many kinds that exist and the enormous number of individuals clearly prove that they are well provided for, to enable them to maintain their existence in the struggle for life. Similarly the expression "on thy belly shalt thou go" represents the subjective idea of abasement; while the erect position characteristic of man alone is symbolical of nobility. These two positions have ever, and in all countries, had that meaning attached to them, the differences being only in degree. In the educated and polite Western European it finds expression in the slight bow of the head. As we travel Eastwards it develops into the stooping salaam, while in degraded barbarism it appears as abject grovelling in the dust; the notion being that to exalt the object of reverence, the self-abasement must be increased. The Psalmist and others use the same metaphor in speaking of the subjection of foes. Thus of Solomon's enemies, David wrote,* "they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust."†

* Ps. lxxii. 9. † See also Isaiah xlix. 23; Micah vii. 17.

Now this contrast is clearly embodied in the legend of the curse upon the serpent; while the writhing motion on its belly seems to represent the act of abject abasement, and such was supposed to have been *caused* by the curse of the Lord God upon it.

Then follows the "prophecy" of the enmity between mankind and the serpent race. I would venture to transpose the ideas; in that the hatred already existed; but the writer puts it in the form of a prophecy, for he is describing its supposed origin, and therefore transfers the reader to that period of time.

The representation of man in his enmity with the serpent is a familiar one in the religions of the East, as of Egypt, India, and Persia. But in every case, besides the physical fact there is a religious idea underlying it, viz., of good ultimately triumphing over evil; and what is particularly noteworthy in the Biblical account is the injury received by the Son of Man in crushing the serpent, and which we can now recognize as representing a triumphant Messiah, who only reached his final exaltation through suffering and death.

Whether the belief, that in the struggle between good and evil, the good would always ultimately triumph, arose from the observation that events which at the time of their occurrence seem "evil" and disastrous do subsequently issue in beneficial

results; or whether it be from a longing *hope* ever rising in the heart of man, and so intensifying itself through generations into a conviction; still we now know that it has proved to be true. The good does ever overcome the evil; for "we know that to them that love God, all things work together for good."* The serpent *has* been crushed by the seed of the woman, though the seed of the woman, the Son of Man, was stung to death in slaying it.

We now come to the curse on the woman. It consists of two facts, the physical suffering and her submission to man. Here, as elsewhere, modern science and physiology have thrown a flood of light upon many an obscurity in the Bible. In the first place let us observe that the former of these supposed curses is practically *nil* with many of the lower orders of the more civilized human races, and with savages.

Secondly, though partly arising from the erect position peculiar to mankind alone, which necessitates a more rigid conformation of the limbs, yet still more is pain chiefly due to artificial and indulgent habits of life; hence the so-called "sorrow" has become more or less characteristic; but it is most certainly not due to any supposed external curse. Similarly the inferior position of woman in all uncivilized and degraded races, where she is a slave or a chattel, simply arises out of

* Rom. viii. 28.

the fact that there is with them but one test of superiority, and that is physical strength. Hence the woman becomes the slave to her often indolent husband; but this condition of things may actually become reversed, in that work may energize the female till she becomes physically superior to the man. Such is the case with some tribes of Africa, and explains the existence of armies of Amazons in that country. But the degradation of woman has otherwise been universal in all ages of the world. Even in Greece and Rome in the days of their prosperity, she was little better than a toy; while in the East she is now often little more than a luxurious nonentity, respected it may be, but her education is purposely neglected. It is only under advanced civilization that she really takes her proper position as a help meet for man, a position apparently recognized by the writer of Genesis as one to which she is entitled; though at the time the first account of marriage as an ordinance of God was written, to consider her on an equality with her husband was probably an almost unique idea in the world.

Here again, then, there is no real necessity to look externally for a curse; the degraded position of woman has been forced upon her by man himself.

There remains the curse upon the ground. This, according to the legend is twofold in its effects. First, in that the ground bears thorns and thistles,

and secondly, in causing sorrow to man; while the words "in the sweat of thy brow," seem to imply that labour, in the eyes of the writer, partook of the nature of a curse as well. We, however, of this age and country, know how to appreciate toil, and regard a life of exertion as healthy and ennobling, and indeed anything but a curse. A life of inactivity, of careless and luxurious ease, or of one who will beg, if not steal, rather than do a stroke of work, is certainly not commended by healthy public opinion, but is rather looked upon as degrading.

Moreover, a life of energy and toil is what is evidently intended for man, recognized, be it observed, in Adam himself, in his having to dress and keep the garden of Eden, even *before* his fall. It is natural, and work is sought for, except by the idle and dissolute; and in no way is it suggestive of sin, or of a curse. In the East, however, where indolence and inactivity are lauded, and idleness is a characteristic of noble birth, the necessity of toil might well be imagined to have been due to some curse upon the ground.

Here, then, as in every instance of a supposed curse, it is simply some natural or artificially induced condition already in existence, which appeared to fall short of what man could conceive of as a happier state of things, which he has thus tried to account for as the result of a direct curse from the Lord God.

There are, in fact, two kinds of "evil" in the world—physical and moral. The term ought properly to be limited to the latter; but partly from supposed analogies between the physical and moral worlds, partly from mistaken notions that both kinds are due to some common cause, the word evil has become adapted to both. It is, however, of the utmost importance that we should carefully distinguish between them, and clearly understand, and keep constantly in mind, the all-important fact that they are essentially distinct, and in no way are external physical evils the result of moral sin, excepting, of course, such as have been brought about through vice. In fact these so-called physical evils are, and ever have been, part and parcel of the constitution of the world from its very beginning. Moral evils have issued from man's disobedience to law, natural or revealed.

How comes it then, that man considers anything at all external to him as an evil? It is that he constantly meets with opposition in his endeavours, hindrances to his progress, difficulties in getting his food; in fact he finds that his position on earth is a struggle for life, and that only the fittest survive that struggle.

Everything that does not come up to his ideas of what he would like, he regards as evil. If the ground bears thorns and thistles as well as corn, the former is an evil, and he curses it; if the snake

in the grass bites his heel when he treads upon it, it is an evil, and he curses it; and so on. But we may note that what appears an evil at one time may be a blessing at another. The hailstorm which destroys the ripening corn may be an evil, as in the plagues of Egypt; but when it discomfits one's enemies, it is a blessing; as it is recorded in Joshua when "the Lord discomfited the Amorites and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, (for) He cast down great stones from heaven and they died; they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword."*

It often, if not always, happens that what one man may regard as a curse, brings a blessing to another.—"It is an ill wind that blows nobody good."—Physical evils are mostly relative things, and are not evils in themselves, but in the way we regard them. Let us consider the corn fields, for example. We look upon bread as our chief food, and take it as a type of all others for which to pray daily, and to thank God for especially; and as wheat may undoubtedly be considered the most important, so when other crops partially or entirely fail while corn may be abundant, let us be thankful for that. Let us not, however, think, as some perhaps may, that it is at any time or place a proof of God's special

* Joshua x. 10, 11.

interference to give us abundant wheat crops rather than others. A fuller knowledge of nature's laws of climate would probably explain the fact without any necessity of an appeal to a miracle. But as one principle of God's government over the earth is expressed by the words "He sendeth rain upon the just and upon the unjust," so analogy shows us that the same fine weather may be the cause of plenty in one locality and scarcity in another; just as the refreshing showers cause thorns, thistles and weeds of all kinds to flourish equally well as a field of fruitful corn.

As in the moral world good is here mixed with evil—tares with the wheat in His Church, as our Lord expresses it; so in the physical world, weeds grow up and choke our flowers, while thistles are found amongst the corn.

This world may be described—with reference to man's wants—in a relative state of perfection only; though all things in themselves may be very good. There are as many beautiful adaptations to maintain its individual life and to propagate its kind in the humblest and most troublesome weed as in the gayest flower or the most useful plant. But, relatively to his own wants, man looks upon all plants of the field that he does not happen to need as only so many interferences to his labour. By the restless and impatient mind the burden as of a curse is felt. If a man looks upon these things with a discon-

tented mind and disordered vision, he begins to create all the effects of a curse, though it may appear absolutely wanting to the humble and contented. No curse upon the ground ever came from without. It is man himself who makes it; and he makes it every day now just as much as when the world began. Again, as the earth brings forth thistles, which man does not want, together with corn, which he does require; so also may the corn that he cultivates produce at one time one hundred-fold, at another but thirty-fold, or be even lost to him altogether. Such is the condition of this world. It is not for us to sit down and querulously complain, and ask why are these things so? Let us remember, earth is not heaven: but a firm faith and trust in a loving God will almost make it heavenly; while perpetual discontent can convert it into a hell. The art of happiness on earth commences with a self-adjustment to our conditions. We cannot make them as perfect as we could wish or imagine, but we can go a long way towards making ourselves perfectly happy under any circumstances. We cannot avoid contingencies which may seem against us, but we can bravely meet and bear them.

Moreover, God has blessed man with an intelligence so that he can vastly improve nature, and often forestall her threatening powers and avert them. He can make the ground yield one hun-

dred-fold more than it would unassisted. Is there not something in that for which he may be thankful —that God has given man power to subdue and vastly improve nature! But under existing circumstances many influences may destroy his calculations. Storms may arise, rain may continue till a harvest is irretrievably damaged; or a drought may prevail till the dry and scorched field fails to yield a crop at all. But yet, with all this let us be duly and humbly thankful for the abundance that we have, if not of one kind, yet of another; if not in one season, it will probably come in the next. It is man's province to subdue the earth, but he could not do it had not God given him an intelligence. The fruits of the earth and the corn of the field are made to yield only by his skill and labour. Nay, those plants which are utterly useless and even injurious to man, in a wild condition, are in many cases rendered valuable and wholesome by his sagacity and perseverance. It is a common opinion that all things were created for the use of man. But I wish to observe that such an expression is not only somewhat arrogant, but is not absolutely, though it may be relatively, true. All nature lies before him, and he is at liberty to use all he can find for his own good; but at the same time, all nature is likewise at the disposal of the beasts of the field. Each enjoys what it finds most suitable to its kind. Man does the same, but with this

difference: that he has the power to so condition the fruits of the earth, and the beasts of the field as well, that he can almost make them subservient to his will. Thus, then, does he subdue the earth, not merely by crushing its rocks and stones till they become a rich soil, ready for the seed; but the very seed itself and the offspring of his cattle become subject to his skill and almost moulded to the forms required. Experience too lends her aid to guard as far as possible against external contingencies;* and so the general issue is an abundant offering from nature to reward the toiling and patient tiller of the soil. Surely we may be grateful for all this? Is there no mercy? No reward for the sweat of the brow? Is the curse on earth so severe, that the corn cannot laugh and sing, and the field be joyful and all that therein is? Does not the Lord still crown the year with His goodness and His paths drop fatness? "Yea, they drop upon the pastures of the wilderness; and the little hills rejoice on every side, the pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys are covered over with corn, and shout for joy."†

There are some persons who imagine the whole earth to have received a sort of shock at the Fall of Man: and I have heard men attribute even the carnivorous habits of serpents, lions and tigers in

* As by methods of Insurance.

† Ps. lxv. 11-13.

killing their prey as a result of it; not knowing that carnivorous animals have existed in all ages of the world, many thousands of years before man was created; just as the serpent moved then as it does now. Similarly, some attribute even now an epidemic, as a cattle-plague, to the existing sins of man:* forgetting that the scarcity of cattle raises their value, and puts money into the purses of certain members of the community, to whom a cattle-plague is so far a blessing! Moreover the cattle-plague passes away, and men do not become morally better. Or again, the burning of a theatre is looked upon as a judgment upon the sinfulness (as it is thought by some) of theatrical performances, and of those who frequent the stage.† Such short-sighted reasoners forget that we do not find churches, schools and hospitals to be providentially exempt from the ravages of fire. Nor are the pious and Godfearing spared in a railway accident, and only notorious sinners slain. All such accidents and calamities as men are subject to are part and parcel of the constitution of the world. No direct judgment from God upon man is ever now recognizable at all; but there is one and the same lesson to

* The opinion of Bishop Ryle in his sermon, *What Meaneth this* [*Cattle*] *Plague?*

† It is worth recording that those connected with the theatre at Cassamicciola, in Ischia, were the principal persons saved in the earthquake, 1883.

be learnt from all, which our Lord has taught us when He said:—"Think ye that those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and killed them, that they were offenders above all the men that dwell at Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."*

I think the reader will now gather from what I have said, that I do not regard any curse as ever having been expressly uttered by God, still less do I follow the yet very popular idea that thorns and thistles, snakes and tigers, are curses, because of man's fall. No examination of any work of nature, *i.e.* of God, ever revealed anything whatever of such being the case. On the other hand, what I would strongly maintain is, that the supposed curse on the ground, on the serpent or on woman, is a purely *subjective* idea, not *objective*. That is, if it be thought to be a curse, it is because man himself alone fancies it to be so. Whoever, therefore, thinks his condition in this world to be cursed, it is *he* and *he alone* that curses it. The story in Genesis (which can no longer be regarded as historical†) represents man's way of putting it—a way as common now as of yore. He lays the blame anywhere else rather than upon himself. He looks without instead of

* Luke xiii. 4, 5.

† See the descriptions of Eden in the Babylonian legends described in Smith's *Chaldean Account of Genesis, &c.*, pp. 84 *seqq*.

looking within—aye, he curses readily enough even his God, instead of sitting, as he ought, in sackcloth and ashes.

Hence may at once be gathered what is the practical lesson to be learnt from this subject: for Christ has revealed *three* facts upon which we may safely rely. The *First* is that the God of heaven and earth is a God of Love, and that *He* has ordained all the circumstances of this world, even that man should be "born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards."* Hence we may have unbounded trust and confidence in Him, notwithstanding all the perplexities that surround us, and we must not blame Him if miseries of our own getting come upon us, as by wars, neglect of sanitary arrangements, &c. Surely man brings many a "curse" upon himself, but none ever fell from our loving Heavenly Father. *Secondly,* that man is not destined to live long here; but that he will live for ever hereafter. Though the assurance of a future life is certainly not a prominent feature in the New Testament, it is sufficiently asserted for our acceptance in faith.† Moreover, we are never told that we shall die again. *Thirdly,* that this world is a short period of trial of our faith and probation in resisting temptation to sin, and happy is he who endureth unto the end, for he will not be ashamed in the day of God's visitation.

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* Job v. 7. † See *infra*, pp. 122, 123.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT ARE SALVATION AND DAMNATION?

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."—*Matt.* i. 21.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."—*Mark* xvi. 16.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."—*Acts* iv. 12.

MAN having fallen, the human race, according to popular theology now runs the risk of eternal damnation: and everyone who does not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, cannot be saved and is doomed to everlasting torments hereafter. Is this a fact?

What do we understand by being saved, and what is salvation? On the other hand, what is meant by being damned?

A very common idea seems to be that salvation is being rescued from hell in a future state of existence after death and the day of judgment, by believing on Jesus as having died on the cross to save us from everlasting torments in that place.

But, if I understand the Scriptures aright, if there be any one thing from which neither God the Father

nor His Christ will save a man, nay, *can* save a man, it is Hell, whatever is to be understood by that word.

This assertion may appear startling to some, nevertheless I believe it to be strictly true; though I do not pretend to know, much less explain, what is implied by the word "hell" in the New Testament as applicable to a future state.

Before, however, I come to establish the truth of that assertion, let us see what salvation means.

The first intimation of a salvation offered to mankind in the New Testament is the sentence I have quoted from St. Matthew's Gospel; and observe how it goes at once to the very pith or marrow of the question. Men were to be saved by Jesus, not from a future hell, but from their present sins.

There were two classes of persons to be saved, Jews and Gentiles. Salvation was first offered to the former; but they refused it, and so, as St. Paul said in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia, "It was necessary that the Word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."* Similarly he wrote to the Romans, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek

* Acts xiii. 46.

. . . glory and honour and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."*

On the other hand if either refused it, it brought condemnation upon both alike; or rather damnation was self-inflicted by a wilful rejection of the Gospel, as the Apostle says—"Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."†

We desire to know then from what sins was the Jew to be saved if he would, and from what the Gentile was also saved, respectively.

As the Gentiles did not receive the offer of salvation until the Apostles commenced their ministry, we must go back to the Gospel histories to find out what it was from which Christ offered to save his fellow countrymen.

There is one thing which stands out most prominently and which lies at the root of all the evils with which the moral life of the Jew was saturated, and that is Legalism, or the idea that righteousness or justification in the sight of God was part and parcel of outward acts of religious worship; and that

* Rom. i. 16; ii. 10.

† Rom. ii. 4, 5.

consequently the more minutely they were observed so much the more righteous was the performer. This was the source of Pharisaism, of proud exclusiveness, of hard-hearted contempt of the poor, well shown in the utterance "This common people who knoweth not the law are cursed,"* of detestation of all foreigners, &c. It was this burden of Legalism from which St. Paul is never tired of declaring the Gospel had liberated him, and consequently in the fulness of his heart longed that his brethren might be freed from it also.

Now it is a well known phenomenon of Nature, that what has been long existent is most difficult to alter: much more difficult is it to retrace the steps of its development and begin again on other lines. In fact it is practically impossible.

"A new broom sweeps clean" has more than one meaning. We generally regard the proverb as signifying the earnestness and enthusiasm of a beginner; but it may mean that the reformer sweeps away all old ideas, refuses to build upon them, but starts afresh in a new direction. The metaphor in this sense was used by our Lord in the parable of the seven spirits; and the parable was applicable to the Jews in that the old spirit of idolatry was completely swept away by the captivity, but the spirits of legalism, pride, exclusiveness, pharisaism, &c. find-

* John vii. 47.

ing the room swept and garnished, rendered the nation seven times worse than it was before.

Christ, therefore, as a wise renovator did not make any attempt to build Christianity on the leading religious ideas of the day. He utterly repudiated pharisaism and at once laid down the principle that unless men's righteousness exceeded that of the scribes and pharisees, they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven. He therefore turned to the despised ones of Israel, the so-called "cursed" people who knew not the law; and who were all the better for not knowing it. There He found a congenial soil where the Righteous Branch might strike root and could grow into a mighty tree which should overspread the whole earth.

The poor were the lost sheep of the House of Israel that He came to save. Neither the prophets not Christ Himself ever attempted to save the shepherds, but both alike denounced them.

The idea of a shepherd and his sheep as typifying God and His people is a familiar one in the Bible.* Thus David sang, "The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want, &c." The Prophets adopt the same imagery. Isaiah speaks of all Israel having gone astray like sheep.† While Jeremiah strongly denounces the Shepherds, "For the

* Ps. xxiii. 1, 2; lxxviii. 52, 53; lxxix. 13. Isa. xl. 11.
† Isa. liii. 6.

pastors have become brutish and have not sought the Lord."* "Woe be unto the pastors, that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture, saith the Lord;"† while an entire chapter is devoted by Ezekiel to their condemnation.‡ In this chapter we note three parties, the pastors, the fat cattle, and the lean cattle. It is not difficult to see who are meant by these terms. The pastors are the rulers civil and religious, the fat are the rich ones, the lean are the poor, no "middle class" existing in those days. In our Lord's time a similar distinction seems possible to be made in regarding the Scribes and Pharisees as the pastors, the Sadducees perhaps might be called the fat cattle and the poor were the lean; and our Lord in going to the poor to preach the Gospel to them was but fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel when he said, "Therefore will I save my flock and they shall no more be a prey. . . . I will set up one shepherd over them and He shall feed them, even my servant David. He shall feed them and He shall be their Shepherd, and I the Lord will be their God."§

The shepherds, then, were the leaders in Israel, the King,‖ his ministers and the priesthood and all to whom the poorer members of the community

* Jer. x. 21. † Jer. xxiii. 1. ‡ Ezek. xxxiv.
§ Ezek. xxxiv. 22-24. ‖ *Cf.* Jer. xlix. 19; l. 44.

looked up to for guidance and protection. Of these Jeremiah had said "A voice of the cry of the shepherds and a howling of the principal of the flock shall be heard"* on the destruction of Jerusalem; but on the return from the captivity he added† "Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast . . . shall be an habitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down."

When we turn to the New Testament, we find the same metaphor prevailing. St. Matthew says, "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd." These, then, were the "lost sheep of the House of Israel"‡ "to whom only He was sent."§

As the shepherds of old by their abuse of their trust and by caring not for the sheep, had caused them to be lost; so Christ, "the Good Shepherd" came to save them as had been foretold by Isaiah that he would—"He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young;"‖ while St. John devotes a beautiful chapter of his Gospel to a similar description of Him.¶

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* Jer. xxv. 36.
† Jer. xxxiii. 12.
‡ Matt. ix. 36; x. 6.
§ Matt. xv. 24.
‖ Isa. xl. 11.
¶ John x.

One of the last injunctions of our Lord to Peter was to feed his sheep and to feed his lambs, for as He had said "it was not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."*

How were they likely or liable to perish, we may ask? Not only by a possible lapse into vice when they grew up, but by being educated into Pharisaic legalism, and so lost to spiritual and moral truth. For thus did the shepherds of old lead their flock astray; making them still more "children of hell" than they were themselves; for the burden continually grew. Generation after generation were more and more punctilious ceremonials added by tradition till there was no remedy but to sweep it all away and start afresh.

This Christ did and the Regeneration was the establishment of His Kingdom of Heaven upon earth on the old and almost forgotten but fundamental truths of Purity of self, Righteousness and Love for others, and Faith in God the Father.

Such was salvation for the Jew; but the shepherds would not accept it, and so condemned themselves as their forefathers had done. The "lean cattle," the poor were however blessed in having the Gospel preached to them; and in return lovingly followed the Good Shepherd into the newly opened and rich pastures of the Lord.

* Matt. xviii. 14.

Salvation for the Jew then was a freedom from Legalism. What was it for the Gentile?

Society in Greece and Rome, when Christ came upon earth, might, indeed, and scarcely in figurative language, be called a living hell upon earth.

Those who have not read any of the heathen literature of the first century of our era or of those immediately preceding it, cannot have the faintest conception of the awfully corrupt state of life at that time. St. Paul in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans does little more than hint at it; but what he does say is enough to shock any right-minded person: but in order to know what being "saved" meant to the new converts to Christianity in the first century it is necessary to know from what they were saved or rescued. When I say that it would be utterly impossible to describe it in modern language, not merely on the score of decency but from want of words, as the author of *Gesta Christi* says;* that Cicero soberly observes that it was held as a disgrace among the Greeks *not* to indulge in those unnatural vices to which St. Paul alludes; that Valerius Maximus intimates that modesty was a virtue unknown, we can at least guess what must have been the state of utter depravity that existed from the highest to the lowest in Greece and Rome. Plato, the philosopher,

* *Gesta Christi*, p. 39.

"who approached nearest to Jesus in his conception of the reforming and renovating power of love to a Divine character," writes Mr. Brace,* "speaks with a despairing sadness of those lusts which were eating out the vigour and character of his people. . . . 'Three principles or moral forces (he says) might break up these evils. First, that of piety, or love to a Divine Person; secondly, the desire for honour or the respect of the good; and thirdly, the love of moral beauty, and that not of the body but of the soul.' But Plato acknowledges them to be 'romantic aspirations,' and concludes, 'But matters have now come to such a pass that the enactment of such laws [the introduction of such principles] seem to be impossible and never likely to take place.'" What Plato could not do and could scarcely dream of ever taking place, Jesus Christ, who came to save men from their sins, has long ago largely effected and is still effecting in the world.

Turn to another utterly debased side of human conduct—the love for blood in the gladiatorial and other exhibitions. St. Augustine† tells us of a Christian convert who was persuaded by his friends to go to the spectacle. He went, but would not open his eyes, till a shout from the multitude caused him to do so involuntarily, and, "so soon as

* *Gesta Christi*, p. 37.

† *Confessions*, Lib. vi. 8. Quoted by author of *Gesta Christi*, p. 63.

he saw the blood, he drank down savageness, nor turned away but fixed his eyes, drinking in phrensy and madness, and was delighted with that guilty fighting and intoxicated with the bloody pastime. Nor was he the man he came, but one of the throng he came unto; yea, a true associate of them that brought him thither." Does not that case, thus described by St. Augustine, fully explain the words in the Epistle to the Hebrews:* "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance?" Probably he was far from being the only one who fell away, like Demas who forsook Paul, having loved the present world. The arena might well be called another hell upon earth.

A third abomination, the abandoning of their own infants systematically by the poor, and of female and all defective children by the rich.

"One of the most powerful of the natural instincts and affections was throughout a wide multitude thus utterly subverted by the [debased] moral tone of the then civilized world."† But far worse must remain unsaid of the unnatural treatment of infants. Neither Plato nor the Stoics, humane as many of

* Heb. vi. 4. † *Gesta Christi*, p. 72.

their ideas were, could stem the torrent of this abuse. It was only in the name of "gentle Jesus" —and there is none other name under heaven—who said, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost"—that this hideous cruelty was then and will be swept away from off the face of the earth.

What is the most convincing evidence of the frightfully corrupt moral tone, or rather a proof of a total want of all moral feeling whatever, was the fact that these things were actually thought to be right, and what Christianity has now taught us to be right, was thought to be wrong.

The prophecy of Isaiah to the Jews might well apply to the Roman people of that age,* "Woe unto them that call evil, good : and good, evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness:" and moreover the prophecy would have been fulfilled, for woe did fall on the doers of those abominations.

Such, then, and a vast deal more and far worse than such was the *world,* out of which all heathen converts were *saved.* Hell was not so much a *thing of the future* as existing then and there upon the earth.

Salvation, then, was a redemption or a rescue from the horribly immoral conditions which were

* Isa. v. 20.

the universal state of all classes of society in the Roman Empire of the first century. To be saved was to be rescued from such corruptions, and to live a new life of purity and righteousness. To change from such a state of darkness to light, to reverse the distorted ideas of good and evil, and to make them evil and good, respectively, as God sees them, was that "change of mind" and disposition implied by the Greek word which is translated in our Bible "Repentance."

Converts to Christianity, who had learnt thus to believe and be saved and had been baptized, were then called saints or the elect; and all who would abandon the evil ways of the heathen world and join the community of saints were such as were "being saved."

In this view of Salvation, I am in accord with Dr. Channing, who thus describes it:—"Salvation is a sublime doctrine. But what does it mean? According to the Scriptures, salvation is, to be rescued from moral evil, from error and sin, from the diseases of the mind, and to be restored to inward truth, piety and virtue. Consequently Salvation and Christian Obedience are one and the same. Nor, indeed, can salvation be anything else. I know but one salvation for a sick man, and that is to give him *health*. So I know but one salvation for a bad man, and that is to make him truly,

thoroughly, conscientiously *good*, — to break the chains of his evil habits—to raise him to the dignity and peace of a true religious life. An intelligent and moral being is saved and blessed just so far as he chooses freely—fully—what is good, great and god-like; as he adopts for his Rule the Will of God. I therefore repeat it. Salvation and Virtue are but different aspects of the same Supreme Good."*

On the other hand, those who would not come out of the world after having heard the good news of the gospel, who voluntarily chose to persist in its vile pollutions, such did not require any further damnation from Christ; for they were already condemned of themselves.

What does our Lord say of all such? "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already. . . . And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that

* *The Perfect Life*, p. 254.

doeth evil hateth the light, lest his deeds shall be reproved."* Such St. Paul describes as "dead in trespasses and sins."†

Damnation, therefore, is a wilful persistence in evil and its consequences, when a man knows what is good and refuses to do it; and neither the Father nor the Son can save such a one if he wilfully, stubbornly, refuses to be saved.

Such, and such only will be damned, nay, are they, rather, condemned already of themselves.

The life those heathens led in the body involved an utter death to the spirit; instead of fearing and abhorring it, they, so to say, revelled in the fire of Gehenna.

What did God say by His prophet Amos to rebellious Israel, who would not be saved in his day? "I have withdrawn the rain from you . . . and ye have not returned unto me. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew, yet ye have not returned unto me. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning, yet ye have not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Therefore, thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: I will cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus; therefore,

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* John iii. 16-20; see also John xii. 44-50; Luke x. 16; 1 Thess. iv. 8.

† Eph. ii. 1.

because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God." Such was their damnation.*

As Amos referred to the Israelites, so Zechariah describes Jerusalem, which the Lord had chosen for the seat of His spiritual government, as a "brand plucked out of the fire;" while Jude similarly speaks of the saved, *i.e.*, Christians of his day, saved from the abominations of the world, as "pulled out of the fire," the fire being that of the living hell, or the world, as it was in Greece and Rome, at that time.

The symbol of fire is a frequent one in Scripture, and it will be worth while noticing some of the references to it as bearing upon the subject before us.

The first mention of Fire in connection with the Deity is when the Angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.†

Again, we read how the Lord descended upon Sinai in fire, and the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain.‡ What was this fire a symbol of? Moses tells us that

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* Under the Christian dispensation, damnation is the natural consequence of *hypocrisy* (Matt. xxiii. 33, Mark xii. 38-40); of *blasphemy* (Matt. xii. 31, Mark iii. 29); on the *abuse of the Lord's Supper* (1 Cor. ix. 29, 30); on *covetousness* (2 Peter iii.); on *apostasy* (Heb. vi. 4-6); on *unbelief* (Mark xvi. 15, 16), &c.

† Ex. iii. 2. ‡ Ex. xxiv. 17.

"the Lord our God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."* Words almost identically the same were repeated by Ezekiel:†—"Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen." The Psalmist‡ likewise declares:—"Our God shall come and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him." Similarly does Isaiah declare God's judgments against the wicked:§—"Behold, the Lord shall come with fire and with His chariots like a whirlwind to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire." While St. Paul speaks with the same imagery, echoing the words of the Prophet, and applies them to Christ:‖—"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

While fire in these passages, we are told, represents God's "fiery indignation" and "jealousy," and refers rather to its destructive effects, as symbolical of the punishment of the impenitent, we must remember that fire has a purifying and refining, simultaneously with a destroying power. Hence the metaphor is equally applicable to the salvation of all that is good, which is thus "saved as by

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* Deut. iv. 24. † Ezek. xxxvi. 5. ‡ Ps. l. 3.
§ Isa. lxvi. 15. ‖ 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.

fire,"* as to what is bad and destroyed by fire. Thus Malachi asks:†—"Who may abide the day of His [the Lord's] coming? . . . for He is like a refiner's fire. . . . And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." Similarly St. Peter compares the tribulations of the early converts to a process of refining:—"The trial of your faith, being more precious than of gold, which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."‡

When we pass to the New Testament, we find at the very commencement of the "new age" of Christianity that St. John the Baptist uses the same metaphor of fire, which was so common under the old dispensation, as symbolical of spiritual destruction. Thus he speaks of Christ:—"He shall baptize you with fire, whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."§ Similarly foretelling the end, St. Peter says:‖—As the world was overflowed by water and perished of old, "so the heavens and the earth now by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of wicked

* 1 Cor. iii. 15.

† Mal. iii. 2, 3; see also Isa. i. 25; Ez. xxii. 18.

‡ 1 Peter i. 7. § Matt. iii. 12. ‖ 2 Peter iii. 7.

men," "whose end (St. Paul says) is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame."*

I have now quoted sufficiently to show how familiar to the minds of the various writers of both the Old and New Testaments was the idea of Fire as symbolically representing the wrath of God upon wicked men.

But, further, the actual use of physical fire was equally familiar to them, and undoubtedly was suggestive of its application as shown above.

The first and, so to say, typical instance was the destruction of the cities of the plain when "the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven."† Just as Moses had taken Sodom and Gomorrah as a solemn warning against a like persistence in sin, to the Israelites,‡ so the Lord Himself is the first to adopt this instance as symbolically illustrative of the destruction of the impenitent:§—"The same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."

We may note in passing that like the word fire, brimstone is equally used as symbolical of God's

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* Phil. ii. 19.
† Gen. xix. 24.
‡ Deut. xxix. 23.
§ Luke xvii. 29.

wrath. Thus, Moses threatens the children of Israel:—"The strangers shall come and say, when they see the whole land is brimstone and salt and burning . . . like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Wherefore hath the Lord done this?"* Similarly Bildad says† to Job of the wicked:—"Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation." So David said:‡—"Upon the wicked the Lord shall rain burning coals, fire and brimstone."

In Isaiah, we first read of Tophet. It was situated in the valley of Hinnom, just outside Jerusalem. It was a place where human sacrifices had been offered by Manasseh,§ and where a fire was constantly burning offal, dead bodies, and refuse. Isaiah thus speaks of it:‖—"Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." Again he says:¶—"It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompense for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day, the smoke thereof shall go up for ever, from generation to generation

* Deut. xxix. 23.
† Job xviii. 15.
‡ Ps. xi. 6.
§ 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6.
‖ Isa. xxx. 33.
¶ Isa. xxxiv. 8-10.

it shall lie waste. None shall pass through it for ever and ever."

Now, is it not pretty evident that St. John had this passage before him when he described a similar judgment upon Rome and her abominable practices? "There followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornications . . . the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God . . . and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone . . . and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."*

Note the source of the brimstone. At first and often is it described as coming from heaven. As a physical fact we may not be far wrong in recognizing lightning as this source of fire. Secondly, it is the dust on the ground. Such we know to be the highly inflammable bitumen which abounds (with salts) in the regions of the cities of the plain and on the borders of the Dead Sea. The streams are next said to be turned into pitch. This is scarcely to be doubted as a description of the liquid bitumen or petroleum which constituted the slime pits of the vale of Siddim.† Lastly in the Revelation we find the

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* Rev. xiv. 8-11. † Gen. xiv. 10.

place of destruction not a plain of brimstone or bitumen, nor a valley as of Tophet, but a lake of brimstone. This last term is equally suggestive of a localization near to Rome. Not only was the Lake Avernus, where was the mythical descent to the lower regions supposed to be, at one period the crater of a volcano; but even in historic times, it was known to emit mephitic vapours, so that it was said by the Roman poet, Lucretius, that birds could not fly over it without being stifled; just as in other parts of the world* cattle are sometimes killed by the sulphurous and other vapours emanating from volcanic lakes and valleys, as from the "Valley of Poison" in Java.

The well-known phenomena of volcanic districts such as of Italy, Sicily, and the Grecian Archipelago, on an island of which, Patmos, St. John was when he wrote the Revelation, would suggest many a physical illustration wherewith to describe in graphic language the fiery indignation of the Lord God upon the heathen world, so that a volcano becomes the lake of brimstone; while the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum in the year 79, would seem to be a direct corroboration of the threatening judgment of God.

I have now, I think, quoted quite enough to show how frequent is the symbol of fire taken to represent God's anger from above: and how the

* Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, vol. i, pp. 589, 602. *Ed.* x.

idea of a destruction by fire and brimstone runs through the whole of Scripture, starting from that of Sodom and Gomorrah and ending with Rome—or as that city is called in the Revelation of St. John—Babylon.

The descriptions of the places are, however, localized, as we say, according to circumstances. Thus the *land* would be brimstone and salt to the Israelites. The *vale* of Hinnom, or Gehenna, outside Jerusalem, becomes the site for the destruction of the impenitent Jews; and a *lake*—perhaps suggested by the Lake Avernus, or still better, an active volcano—the place of destruction for the Roman "world."

If, now, Gehenna, the Vale of Tophet, and the lake of brimstone, were only figurative of the temporal destruction of unbelievers under the fiery wrath of God, so that the plain of brimstone and Tophet may be taken to represent the captivities of Israel in Assyria and the Jews in Babylon; while the lake of brimstone is symbolical of the sacking of Rome and the dissolution of the Roman empire—is the popular idea of a future hell, of one awaiting mankind if impenitent, in a future existence abolished altogether? In the popular sense, I say unhesitatingly, There is no such place whatever. If so, can the word hell stand for anything else? To this I am inclined to answer "Yes"—but *what*, I know not. If so, again, to whom will it apply?

The passages in the Gospels concerning blasphemy against the Holy Ghost will perhaps furnish us with the best answer.—"Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit" says our Lord,* "hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin," because they said He had an unclean spirit. St. Matthew† adds the words, "neither in this world nor in that which is to come."

With reference to the last sentence, it is, I think, to be regretted that the revisers of the New Testament have not here, in this very important passage nor elsewhere where the words "eternal" and "world to come" occur, attempted to give them the more exact meaning, which is generally accepted by leading scholars of the day. What our Lord meant to say "was a simple truth founded upon human experience and vindicated by common sense, that the blasphemous calling of good, evil, the wilful shutting our eyes to the light that would bring us salvation from evil, can never be cured by any divine teaching, whether under the then existing Jewish system, or in that Christian kingdom which our Lord was founding, and which, as the Greek text tells us, was not, 'to come,' but was already 'coming in.'"‡

We may remember that a similar idea of the

* Mark iii. 29. † Matt. xii. 32.

‡ *Essay on the right Translation of αἰών and αἰώνιος*, p. 8, by Rev. T. W. Fowle.

impossibility of forgiveness upon *wilful* disobedience is found in the Old Covenant. Mr. W. Robertson Smith remarks how "the hierarchy [under the Levitical system] had no dispensing power. If a man sins, he has recourse to the sacramental sacrifice appointed for his case. The priest makes atonement for him and he is forgiven. But knowingly and obstinately to depart from any ordinance is to sin against God with a high hand, and for this there is no forgiveness. 'He hath despised the word of the Lord and broken his commandment: that soul shall be cut off in his guilt.'* "†

Remember the passages I quoted from the Epistle to the Hebrews on the impossibility of renewing an apostate who "crucifies the Son of God afresh and puts Him to an open shame."

That such persons have good grounds for fearing the fiery indignation of God, we have the authority of our Lord himself, who said,‡ "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him which after He hath killed hath power to cast into Gehenna; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him!"

Did not these words justify the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in saying,§ "We know

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* Num. xv. 30, 31.
† Smith, *l.c.*, p. 12.
‡ Luke xii. 4.
§ Heb. x. 30.

Him that hath said, 'Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will recompense,' saith the Lord. . . . It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

There is no doubt that a great deal too much of a future life has, so to say, been read into the New Testament. The number of passages, either in the Gospels or Epistles, where a distinct reference to an existence after death is made, is probably much fewer than has been or is generally supposed: but that the expressions "Kingdom of Heaven" and "Kingdom of God," refer not so much to a future kingdom, but directly to Christianity on earth. Similarly the condemnations and threatenings which the Revelation of St. John contain refer to the then existing heathens and persecutors of the early Christian Churches, and but little if at all to impenitent Christians under a future regime, *except by implication.*

But the point which especially concerns us Christians of this nineteenth century is this: *We cannot free the text from such implications of a future destruction of some sort of the impenitent and blaspheming.* We know of no higher kind of moral and religious life than the Christian life, as portrayed in the perfection which Jesus Christ came to exhibit before men and bade us follow. If, then, we believe in any future existence—and that such will exist is too plainly established in the

New Testament* to require any arguments from me to support it now—then, unless we receive some further revelation, the Christian life must be prolonged there, for we know not how to prepare for any other.

Conversely, if the blasphemer against the Holy Ghost can receive no forgiveness either under the Judaistic or Messianic, *i.e.*, the Christian regime on earth, and if this latter "age" is to be prolonged into a future existence after physical death and the resurrection; then, it cannot but logically follow that the unforgiveness in this world must be prolonged into the next world also.

But as to what will be the actual state or conditions of the impenitent soul hereafter we are in profound and absolute darkness. It is only expressed in Scripture by the metaphorical phrase—"being cast out from the presence of God."

A few words on the popular idea of "everlasting punishment." If the views I have expressed above be correct, the word "punishment" is inappropriate; for it is not so much a direct act of God upon man, as of man upon himself, so that instead of the word "punishment" I would substitute *self-condemnation*. It is a self-infliction of spiritual destruction through the inevitable results of God's spiritual laws which govern the moral world. This is in accordance with

* See Matt. xxii. 30; Mark xii. 23-27; 1 Cor. xv.

what our Lord himself said.* Is this self-condemnation everlasting? I believe this question cannot be answered. As a man sows, so he must reap, but whether he will ever be able to repent in a future world after the resurrection we have no means of knowing. If, however, we can draw any inferences from the metaphorical utterances of Christ and of His Apostles, the reverse, indeed, would seem to be implied.†

Though all the expressions refer primarily to the condemnation of those who should reject the Gospel of Salvation, or refuse to be converts to Christianity; yet, by implication, they would seem to be also applicable to some "second death" which will fall upon hardened impenitents in a future world, but further than that I would not offer an opinion.

Such are the condemned. But let us distinctly bear in mind, it is not Christ nor the Father who condemns. The unforgiven man has already condemned himself, for as St. Paul says, he wilfully resists the Holy Ghost. It is upon the existence of what is called our Free Will that God recognizes our moral responsibility, and it is that alone which condemns. God willeth not the death of a sinner,

* John iii. 18.

† I would refer the reader to such passages as the following:—Matt. viii. 12, xiii. 30, 41, xviii. 8, xxv. 41-46; Mark ix. 43, 46; Luke xix. 27; John v. 29; 2 Cor. v. 10; 2 Thess. i. 8; Heb. vi. 4-8.

but that all should repent and be saved; but if a man refuses to hear the report, shuts his ears to the truth, resists the Holy Ghost,—who can save him? Christ cannot, and God will not! He is condemned already, and determinately and of his own free will casts salvation to the winds here and hereafter!

On the other hand, those who joyfully accept the offer of salvation here on earth repenting them of their sins, and do their utmost to put on the Lord Jesus, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, then that salvation (if they do not subsequently fall away in sin), as far as we know now, will be salvation for ever. They shall enter into the joy of their Lord, and be welcomed into the bosom of the heavenly Father.

Now, if the preceding interpretation of Salvation and Damnation be correct, the popular theory mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter cannot be true; and as that theory involves the Doctrine of the Atonement, we must in the next place endeavour to discover what the Scriptural meaning of the word Atonement really is.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT WAS THE ATONEMENT?

"If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ (who was delivered up for our trespasses; and was raised for our justification, Rom. iv. 25),—through whom we have now received the atonement."—*Rom.* v. 10-12.

ACCORDING to the common belief mankind is saved by the Atonement made for us by Jesus Christ.

What was the Atonement? It is easy to ask that question; but to judge from the very various interpretations advanced by many theologians, it appears to be very difficult to answer it. The most generally received ideas would seem to be that Jesus Christ died, like the sacrificed goat on the great day of Atonement, instead of sinners: that His offering of Himself was sacrificial, as St. Paul says to the Ephesians,* "Walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for you,

* Eph. v. 2.

an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour;" that His sufferings were vicarious, as when St. Peter said* that "Christ also hath suffered for sins;" again, that His death was a satisfaction to divine justice for sin—as in the words:—"Whom God set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith by His blood, to show His righteousness . . . that He might Himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus."† Once more, His sufferings are considered penal in their character, or "judicially inflicted, in the execution of a law which denounced punishment on the sins of men."‡

On the other hand, that Christ's perfect life, followed by His self-sacrificing death, was an act infinitely pleasing and meritorious before God, is, I believe, the actual view of the sacred writers, and that through Him all sin may be forgiven.

It may be observed that the word "Atonement" only occurs in the New Testament once, viz., in the passage I have quoted; and even that is a mistranslation, for in the Revised Version the correct rendering, "Reconciliation," is given: but the question remains, Is the ordinarily received doctrine of the Atonement to be found in the Bible?

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* 1 Peter iii. 18. † Rom. iii. 25.

‡ *The Scripture Doctrine of the Atonement*, by Prof. Crawford, p. 190.

Before discussing the new interpretation, it may not be unadvisable to mention that the all but unanimous belief of the "Fathers," which was held for many centuries, was that the Redemption of mankind implied "not only the payment of a price in order to our deliverance, but also *the reception of this price by some enemy or oppressor* by whom we were held in bondage. And inasmuch as Satan is the great enemy, from whose thraldom Christ has set us free, they did not shrink from affirming that the sacrifice of Christ was a ransom paid in our behalf to the Evil One!"*

The first thing to do in any discussion is to be accurate as to the exact meaning of terms. What then does the word "Atonement" mean? It is common enough in the Old Testament, and in Hebrew generally signifies a "covering,"† as in Lev. v. 18, "The priest shall make atonement for him on account of his sins." So too in Psalm xxxii.

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* Prof. Crawford, *l.c.*, p. 62.

† Mr. W. Robertson Smith observes, "The original meaning of *Kapper*, to atone, is disputed," and that "The religious sense, as Wellhausen admits, does not start from the idea of covering the face. Except in the Levitical Law, it is God who *Kipper* (wipes out) sin. . . . This notion of God wiping out sin is the pure religious idea of the atonement, as we find it in the Prophets, without any relation to sacrifice." (Smith, *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 438, NOTE 5.) Hence Christianity is a return to the true conception of forgiveness of sinners on their sincere repentance alone.

1, 2, we read, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile"—a passage which St. Paul paraphrases by the words, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered."* The Hebrew word here used is the exact counterpart of the Greek word for "expiate" used by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. "Wherefore it behoved Him in all respects to be made like to his brethren, in order that he may prove Himself merciful, and a faithful high priest in things that relate to God, to expiate the sins of the people."† Now it is important to observe, as has been remarked by Canon Farrar, that "this word (ἱλάσκεσθαι, translated 'to expiate') is never connected with 'God' or the 'wrath of God' either in the LXX. or New Testament, because (as Delitzsh says) man must not [any longer] regard sacrifice as an act by which he induces God to show him grace; just as it is nowhere said that Christ's sacrifice propitiated God's wrath, as though that sacrifice had in any way anticipated God's own gracious purpose."‡

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* Rom. iv. 7. See also James v. 19, 20.

† Heb. ii. 17, 18.

‡ *The Early Days of Christianity*, by Canon Farrar, vol. i, p. 362 (note):—Comp. Ecclus. iii. 3, "Whoso honoureth his father maketh an atonement for his sins;" 30, "Alms maketh an atonement for sins;" xx. 28 and

Before considering the Reconciliation between man and God which Christ has made, let us observe the light in which atonement was held during the period of the Old Testament. If we accept the view that the Levitical law was not made till the time of Ezra, we find this agrees with the fact that the prophets before the captivity knew nothing of a sacrificial atonement being necessary. In that legislation, as Mr. W. Robertson Smith observes, "the feasts, the sacrificial ritual, the ordinances of ceremonial purity, are always in the foreground as the necessary forms in which alone the inner side of religion, love to God and man, can find acceptable expression."* "The whole system is directed to the maintenance of holiness in Israel, as the condition of the benefits which Jehovah promises to bestow on His people in the land of Canaan. And therefore every infringement of law, be it merely in some point of ceremony which we might be disposed to think indifferent, demands an atonement, that the relation of God to His people may not be disturbed."†

"Sacrifice, atonement and forgiveness of sin are absolutely dependent on the hierarchy and its service. The mass of the people have no direct access to their God in the sanctuary. The maintenance of the Old Testament covenant depends on the priestly

xxxiv. 19, "Neither is He pacified for sin by the multitude of sacrifices."

* Smith, *l.c.*, 209. † *l.c.*, 210.

mediation, and above all on that one annual day of expiation when the high priest enters the Holy of Holies and 'cleanses the people that they may be clean from all their sins before Jehovah.'* "†

The idea of the necessity of Atonement runs through the whole of the Levitical system; but it was unknown before the time of Ezra. The Prophets of Israel do not speak of sacrifices as necessary but *just the reverse.* "I will have mercy and not sacrifice"‡ represents their idea. That repentance was followed immediately by Jehovah's gracious forgiveness is what they preach. They have no concern in ritualism. As Mr. Smith observes, "The prophetic theory of religion has nothing to do with the law of works. Religion, they teach, is the personal fellowship of Jehovah with Israel, in which He shapes His people to His own ends, impresses His own likeness upon them by a continual moral guidance. Jehovah did not find Israel a holy and righteous people; He has to make it so by wise discipline and loving guidance, which refuses to be frustrated by the people's shortcomings and sins. The continuance of Jehovah's love in spite of Israel's transgressions, which is set forth with so much force in the opening chapters of Hosea, is the forgiveness of sins."§

In the worship at the many sanctuaries of Israel

* Lev. xvi. 30.
† Smith, *l.c.*, 211.
‡ Cf. Hos. vi. 6 and Matt. ix. 13.
§ Smith, *l.c.*, 301, 2.

in the earlier days of the history of that people, sacrifices and offerings partook of the nature of *homage*, while the idea of *atonement* was very subordinate if present at all. Indeed the earlier the period one studies this subject the more we find the tendency of the offering is to appease the Deity, or to curry favour with Him; but no moral sense of sin in the offerer himself is present. The notion of atonement being at all necessary is only compatible with a sense of wrong-doing. It is not till we come to Ezekiel, and still more to the Levitical legislation, that the element of atonement takes a foremost place. "The sense of sin had grown deeper under the teaching of the prophets, and amidst the proof of Jehovah's anger that darkened the last days of the Jewish state, sin and forgiveness were the main themes of prophetic discourse."* But the fundamental difference between the view of the Prophets and that of the Levitical system was that a vicarious sacrifice was absolutely essential in the latter, but entirely unnecessary in the former.

Christianity, which habitually puts Legalism and its principles on one side, accepts the teaching of the Prophets, repeats the cry, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?"† and adds the simple assurance, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."‡

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* Smith, *l.c.*, 381. † Ez. xxxiii. 11. ‡ Acts xvi. 31.

With reference to the Christian phrase it would have been better perhaps if the expression "Doctrine of Reconciliation" had been adopted instead of "Doctrine of Atonement," though both words fundamentally mean the same thing. For Atonement is simply At-one-ment or the bringing together, *i.e.*, reconciling—such as were previously at enmity with one another. The Doctrine of the Cross is the great Doctrine of Reconciliation whereby, as Mr. F. W. Robertson well shows,* man is reconciled to God, reconciled to man, and reconciled to duty. "While we were enemies," writes St. Paul to the Romans, "we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son." Such was the At-one-ment with the Father.

Now, Reconciliation is opposed to alienation or estrangement, which was the condition of the Ephesians, to whom St. Paul says,† "Ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye that were once far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ." Again, the Apostle describes how God in Christ hath broken down the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, so that "through Him we both have access in one spirit unto the Father." He speaks of Christ as "having

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* *Sermons*, vol. iv, p. 238. † Eph. ii. 12, *et seqq.*

created in Himself and of the twain one new man, so making peace," and thus "reconciled them both in one body unto God through the Cross having slain the enmity thereby."

The result of that At-one-ment (The Great "Mystery" as St. Paul calls it), or the making what were at enmity, now at-one, together, was the bringing Jew and Gentile into one flock or one and the same brotherhood; secondly, the bringing Jew and Gentile into communion with a common Father; for before that, the Gentile was without God in the world, while the Jew had what he considered as his tribal God, Jehovah, but had yet to learn that He was one and the same with the God of the Gentiles.

Moreover the Greek word translated "Reconciliation" is a very significant one. It signifies "a thorough change," and it expresses exactly what was required of both Jew and Gentile in order to become reconciled to God and to each other. With the Jew, ceremonial observances and letter worship were well nigh everything, and which St. Paul designates with the strong term "curse;" for he says :*—"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." This Legalism, or a literal adherence to rules, was to be replaced by Spirit-worship. Externals must yield the place to internals—the outward sign to the

* Gal. iii. 13.

inward spirit. Hard and fast rules of conduct must be merged into vital principles. In a word, dead formalism must be thrust aside; for now Love has to occupy all the space in the heart: and so a lip-service and morality is to be supplanted by heart-worship and religion. Together with such must vanish pharisaical hypocrisy, cant, pride, and all hard exclusiveness. On the other hand love, joy, peace, long-suffering, willing self-sacrifice and humility must reign instead. Such was the nature of the "thorough change" or reconciliation for the Jew to undergo, if he wished to be saved at all.

And what was the thorough change for the Gentile? For him it was perhaps in some ways even greater than for the Jew, for the moral corruption which prevailed at that time in Greece and Rome was too fearful to be detailed in modern language. They knew not God. They knew not sin. What was evil they thought to be good: and what Christ condemns, they considered right to do. Conscience with the heathen world had completely taken the wrong side! Like the word Reconciliation, so too the Greek for Repentance signifies "a change of mind." The understanding hitherto darkened now becomes enlightened, the conscience hitherto dead is now quickened into life, and the Gentile must henceforth transpose his ideas of good and evil. Having learnt to do God's will, he now knows that Salvation is only of the Lord. Such was Reconciliation and

Repentance—a thorough change of mind, understanding, and conscience.

If this interpretation be correct, we see that no idea of a vicarious sacrifice thus far enters at all: for Atonement is identical with Reconciliation, or the abolishing of enmity and alienation between man and man, and between man and God.

But the question may still be asked, Did not Jesus offer Himself up as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and thereby alone secure that reconciliation with the Father; and so, "while we were enemies (as Paul says) we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son"?

The answer to this question necessitates a preliminary enquiry into the meaning of Sacrifice. The origin of sacrifices in general, and of burnt sacrifices in particular, is very simple. In the infancy of the human race every exhibition of force in nature is supposed to be animated; all that brings about opposition and harm, or, as we call them, physical evils, is supposed to require propitiation, in order to induce it to act favourably. A large class of divine beings were simply deified ancestors who became powerful spirits after death. To appease their wrath, to induce them to be favourable, the best of everything they were supposed to like must be given them every day; if omitted, disasters would occur; hence the origin of the sense of duty, in attending to the rights of the dead. Of all the

things a savage likes best, it is food. Hence food must be offered to his ancestral spirits, who are now his deities.

The sole object of a burnt-offering, then, was to propitiate and to appease, and so avert calamities upon men, without the slightest idea of the worshipper having done any moral wrong or committed any sin which required forgiveness or expiation: but he offered it with the hope that his ancestral spirits would be pleased, and would do him good, accordingly, and not harm. It was a method of currying favour with the Spirit world.

When Noah went out of the Ark we read how he built an altar and offered burnt-offerings of every clean beast and of every clean fowl, and the Lord smelled a sweet savour and so said "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake." If we turn to the still more ancient and polytheistic account of the Deluge deciphered from the tablets found in the Library of the Assyrian Kings at Nineveh, we find the corresponding portion runs as follows:—"I sent the animals forth to the four winds, I poured out a libation—I built an altar on the peak of the mountain. Seven herbs I cut. At the bottom of them I placed reeds, pines, and simgar. The gods collected at its savour, the gods collected at its good savour, the gods like flies over the sacrifice gathered."

In those words is expressed what was then

actually believed to take place. It was supposed that the gods would be angry with men and do them harm if they were not thus daily supplied with savoury meat; hence it became a duty to offer it; just as they do in Hindoo temples at this very day. Neglect of this duty brought down vengeance. Hence was an easy passage to the idea of sacrificing victims to the gods to appease their wrath against errors and mistakes; but be it observed, the idea of "sin" was quite unknown. The Greek word thus translated only means "missing one's aim," or mistake. If now we turn to the Jewish sacrifices, many if not all of them appear to be adaptations of far older religious observances carried on by the Egyptians, and were probably astrological in their original purport, *e.g.*, the morning and evening sacrifice were originally offered to the rising and setting sun. Moses like a wise legislator built upon the practices in existence, but changed the religion from the worship of the host of heaven and of many spiritual beings to one God. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord." And the sacrifices were now offered solely to Him. But still the idea of substitution, or the offering of a victim, to appease their God and induce him to save them from pestilence, famine, or the sword, was the only one that could be at first entertained.

The great object, however, which Moses had before him was to awaken in that barbaric horde,

the Children of Israel, whom he had brought out of Egypt, the true nature of sin: that it was not merely a mistake, or unfortunate occurrence, but was a thing of abhorrence in the sight of God. Instead of solely regarding wrong acts from a selfish point of view, they were to try and realize a sinful act as seen by Jehovah. The first occasion where this was brought pointedly to the notice and perception of the Children of Israel was that of Aaron's making the golden calf in Horeb. "Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin."* So again after the murmuring at Moses and Aaron "wrath went out from the Lord." Aaron put on incense and made an atonement for the people, and the plague was stayed.† It is true that on these two occasions no sacrifice appears to have been offered; yet Moses acts as a propitiatory mediator; but on the Great Day of Atonement the whole procedure was looked upon as expiatory and victims were offered vicariously, one goat being sacrificed, the other driven out into the wilderness to carry away the sins of the people. And so universal was the necessity of sacrifice ultimately felt to be, that "without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins." We well know to what abuses this creed has led men; not only the Israelities,

* Ex. xxxii. 30. † Num. xvi. 47.

but all other nations such as the Hindoos, and even large sections of Christians, who make their worship a system of ceremony and external rites instead of self-sacrifice and a worshipping in spirit and in truth.

"I delight not in the blood of bulls and of goats." "Away with your solemn assembly, it is an offence unto me!" "I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice!" Such were the protestations of the Psalmist and Prophets of the Lord. The whole system of vicarious offering for the sins of man was really unacceptable to the Lord. But, "when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, (then) he shall save his soul alive."*

Sacrifice of self is the only kind that is acceptable to God. For this is the meaning of the words of our Lord:—"If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."† You cannot read the books of the prophets without perceiving that such is their teaching. They foreshadowed Christianity, but they could not enforce it.

Let us understand then, clearly, that the idea of offering up an external substitute for oneself in the form of a goat or anything else, animate or

* Ezek. xviii. 27. † St. Luke xiv. 26.

inanimate, is only compatible with crude and childish notions of worship. God may be so gracious as to accept such poor substitutes, but the complete impotence of the sacrifice was obvious (as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews shows) in that they had to be continually offered. Real sacrifice can only be from within; just as it is not what goes into a man that defiles him, but what comes out of him; so the Psalmist, the Prophets, and above all Christ would teach men that all sacrifices must come from within, from the heart, and be voluntary, and not be vicarious and external. Self-sacrifice alone can ever please God.

But now when we come to the New Testament we find it almost saturated with expressions taken from Judaistic feeling and customs. Thus St. Paul speaks of Christ's offering, like Noah's, as "a sweet-smelling savour." St. John describes Him as a "propitiation." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews draws out a long comparison between the Priesthood of the Old Covenant and that of Christ in the New. He uses phraseology strongly tinctured with Judaistic expressions. He compares Christ to a High Priest, and to complete the analogy he speaks of Him as expiating the sins of the people, while both in Greek and in Hebrew is a word used to signify, to "cover" them: *i.e.*, to put them in a state of reconciliation with God, who will remember their sins no more. Like a High Priest, he offers up a

victim, but herein lies the distinction—it is spiritual self-sacrifice of one who not only lays down His life for the good cause He has taken in hand, but whose whole life was one continual self-sacrifice for the good of mankind. Instead of solely placing a lamb on an altar of fire, He, the Lamb of God, passed through many a fiery trial of temptation to sin, and trials of His faith as the Son of Man and as a human sufferer upon earth.

What is the effect of all this? And by this, I do not mean solely His death, but even more, His life, which preceded it. Did He thereby think to appease the wrath of a powerful and angry Deity? Certainly not; for "herein was the love of God manifested in us. God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him": "in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."

How can you help anyone, if you cannot appreciate nor understand, from want of experience, what it is he desires? How can you show sympathy, much less give grace to help in time of need, if you have had no fellow-suffering with him?

Bearing in mind that the sole object of sacrifice amongst barbaric peoples is to propitiate the goodwill of a supposed powerful deity, who could, and was often more than half inclined to do harm, we find St. John most emphatically declaring the One true God to be a totally different character, such

indeed as the prophets of old were never tired of reiterating to His people, namely, that He was Love itself,* and as a proof He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. But if Christ was crucified really and actually (as many seem to suppose) to propitiate the Father, is it not a contradiction in terms to say that the Deity sent His only-beloved Son into the world, in order to die on the Cross and so propitiate Himself? All such expressions are simply metaphorical adaptations from the old Jewish dispensation, which Christ came to abolish. If there be any one thing which God hath declared He will not have, it is a vicarious propitiatory sacrifice, as a substitute for the suffering due to a sinner. When, therefore, we turn our eyes to the Cross and ask in what way was Christ's death upon the Cross able to appease the Father, I think those who believe in the vicarious theory will find it very difficult to answer. Is it the amount of physical pain He underwent? Thousands of martyrs have suffered more. Even the thieves were more cruelly treated than He! Or is it the amount of mental pain? Who can gauge that, so as to base any argument upon it? It is true we read in many places that Christ died for, or instead of, mankind. No one would deny it. But when we know that by His death, and still more by His resurrection, Judaistic

* 1 John iv. 7.

germs have developed into Christianity, and that heathendom has joined hands with it also, and that the world has been regenerated, it is scarcely a metaphor to say we have been bought with the price of His blood, and redeemed by Him from all iniquity. But here, again, the idea of "redemption," or "buying back," is only metaphorical. It is never said to whom the price was paid. St. John says:* "Thou wast slain and didst purchase unto God with Thy blood men of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests and they reign upon earth."

We know, however, from what the Jew was redeemed, and from what the Gentile was redeemed. The Jew was redeemed from the curse of the law,† and the Gentile from ignorance of sin and of God: and all men who should become Christians from all iniquity.‡

But after all, Redemption in the New Testament has nothing to do with purchase. The Greek word signifies a "loosing away," and that not from a future hell, but from present evils or sin. Now this is what Jesus Christ came to do. To redeem men was to loose or rescue men from their sins. The process was the so-called "being saved," and their redemption was the same as present salvation;

* Rev. v. 9. † Gal. iii. 13. ‡ Titus ii. 14.

while the "thorough change" of character undergone by the penitent convert constituted his Reconciliation to God, and his mental state was expressed by the phase "change of mind," translated in the English Version "Repentance."

A characteristic passage where the Sacrifice of Christ is contrasted with those of the Old Covenant is in Heb. ix. 11-14:—"But Christ having come a High Priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Let me now attempt to compose a sentence phrased in the popular form, and then translate the words into a more correct rendering according to their Greek equivalents. We might say:—"Jesus Christ offered Himself as a Sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour and as a propitiation for the sins of the world; thereby redeeming* men from all iniquity.

* Canon Farrar remarks:—"The metaphor only applies

Having made an Atonement, He purchased them to God by His blood; and rose again from the dead for their justification." Translated into more accurate phraseology, the preceding would stand thus:—"Jesus Christ offered Himself, both in His human life as the Son of Man, and in His death upon the cross, as a willing Self-sacrifice for the salvation of mankind; whereby He hath turned many to righteousness, loosing men from the bonds of iniquity, and covering a multitude of sins. Having thus made Reconciliation between man and God, He purchased them (as it were) by His blood for God; while by rising again from the dead, He not only proved that death—the wages of sin—had no power over Him; but He pronounced the justification of man in His acquittal from the charge of guiltiness before God. Moreover He thereby became a great moral and spiritual power to regenerate man in all future ages, so that, hereafter, whosoever will have faith in Him shall be saved, and whosoever will not believe is self-condemned."

There remains one important point upon which I must say a few words before I conclude.

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to the effects of the redemption as regards man, whom it sets free from the bondage of sin. So little is the notion of its Divine side dwelt upon, that it is never said to whom the ransom is paid; and for many centuries the Church in general held the strange and grievous notion that it was paid to Satan."—*Early Days of Christianity*, vol. i, p. 423 (*note*).

If it has been an error to suppose that Jesus by His death wrought any real Atonement in the sense of a vicarious expiation of the sins of the whole world, by appeasing the wrath of God, is there not a danger of making shipwreck of the faith of myriads? The answer appears to me to be this. Those who can receive it, let them receive it! In other words, admitting that there will always be a certain class of minds who cannot bring themselves to feel God's forgiveness without some vicarious offering on their behalf; who feel their sins to be such a heavy burden on their conscience that something must be done for them, and that no efforts of repentance on their part will be sufficient to expiate them—to such for all future time, as it has been for well nigh two thousand years, Christ's sacrifice regarded as a real expiation will probably alone be sufficient. Let it be so. There seems to be, as it were, a principle of accommodation in God's Providence, so that just what a man makes of it, such is it to him. Thus the Children of Israel looked to the bulls and goats to take away their offences: and their childlike faith was accepted as far as it went, and they were atoned for by those sacrifices. So is it even at the present day. To how many thousands is the doctrine of the Real Presence or of Transubstantiation one they would die for rather than give up! Yet, like the idea of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice, we believe them to be errors

arising from taking metaphorical expressions as if they were matters of fact. We must make enormous allowances for constitutional differences in different minds. Our Lord was fully aware of this necessity, and showed that He was by so frequently closing His discourses with the remark:—"He that hath ears to hear let him hear:" or "He that can receive it, let him receive it." If, therefore, there be any to whom the idea of Christ's expiation is more than a metaphor only, and cannot yet bring himself or herself to see that it is such; then I would say of them that they are conscientiously bound to reject this view, until they can hereafter convince themselves it is the truth.

Let us remember that while endeavouring to maintain that in Christ's dying for sinners and rising again for their justification He was no vicarious victim offered up to appease God's wrath, it makes no difference in the sight of God, and that repentance will always ensure forgiveness, whether Christ had died or not. This is obvious; because it is offered over and over again to the rebellious Israelites by the Prophets in the Old Testament long before Christ came upon earth, as for example in the words of Ezekiel, where he declares no one shall bear the burdens of another, who alone shall suffer for his own sins:—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of his father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of his son:

the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in the righteousness that he hath done he shall live."*

But when we say that Christ died for men, what do we really mean? Simply this: that if Christ had not come on earth and preached the Gospel of repentance and remission of sins, (and in executing His mission perished in the Cause, but rose again,) then the world would have gone on as before, and men would have died in their sins; and the mightiest revolution this earth has ever witnessed would never have taken place, and moral chaos would have come!

An objection may be raised in reading this chapter that while I deny anything of a vicarious character as appertaining to Christ's death, I do not say *how* the forgiveness of our sins is connected with it; if we are to believe that sinners are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, the inquiry might be urged, how are we to understand this as having taken place? What, then, do the Scriptures say in reply? They tell us that every truly

* Ez. xviii. 20.

repentant sinner is assured on the part of God, that every sin he has committed will be forgiven him, *through Jesus Christ;* that all condemnation is set aside for ever; that he may freely commit himself here and hereafter into the hands of a loving Father who is in Heaven. Is not, then, this sufficient? Why should we search to find out the mode in which this reconciliation has been brought about between man and God, if it has not been revealed? The fact is that all of the many attempts to explain the "how" are simply and purely rationalistic; in that they have been elaborated out of the brains of all the numerous writers respectively who have tried to solve the insoluble. The Scriptures, I repeat, tell us plainly that Christ died for men, that through His death a reconciliation between man and God has been accomplished, that in Jesus Christ man is united to God and to his fellow men; but *how* this has been effected, we have no means of knowing, for it is left entirely unexplained. It has been well observed that "the language of Scripture on this subject is throughout not philosophical but popular; it is not intended to satisfy the requirements of the logical intellect, but to exert a mighty power on the heart. . . . The fact that in Jesus Christ God is united to man, and man to God; that God is revealed in Christ as the common Father of mankind; that in Him all men are brothers; and that through Him henceforth and

for ever there is no condemnation to the believer, but, on the contrary, the fullest access to God as a loving Father, was sufficient for the writers of the New Testament, without deeming it necessary to pry into 'the How and the Why,' and this ought to be sufficient for us."*

* *The Church of England Pulpit and Ecclesiastical Review*, vol. xvi, p. 83.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT IS FAITH?

"As the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead."—*James* ii. 26.

HAVING considered the meaning of the words Atonement and Reconciliation, the question arises, What is required on the part of the man to render his reconciliation to God perfect? The reply is that the first things that are demanded of him are Repentance and Faith; and the convert to Christianity was said to be saved, or justified by Faith; *i.e.* if he have Faith and repent of his sins, he is in the position of a criminal who has been acquitted by forgiveness. Hence Justification is identical with Salvation; both words signifying the condition of a man who is reconciled to God. Then if he be baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, he is a Christian in every respect.*

It is interesting to observe what different phrases the writers of the New Testament use to express

* The reader will bear in mind that Salvation in this work always means in this life and is identical with true Christianity.

the same facts. Thus man is said to be "Saved" through Faith (Eph. ii. 8), by Hope (Rom. viii. 24), by Grace (Eph. ii. 5, 8), by Christ's life (Rom. v. 10), by the washing of Regeneration (Titus iii. 5), by the ingrafted word (James i. 21), by believing (Rom. x. 9). Similarly is a man said to be "Justified" by words (Matt. xii. 37), by doing the law (Rom. ii. 13), by Faith (Rom. iii. 28; Gal. ii. 16 &c.), by Works (Rom. ii. 13 and James ii. 21), by Grace (Rom. iii. 24) by the blood of Christ (Rom. v. 9) &c.

There might seem to some to be great contradictions here; but there is really none. These phrases simply represent the manysidedness of the Christian character. It is the combination of Faith, Hope, Charity, and we might add Purity, which go to compose it. Any one of them may be said to justify a man *provided the others be understood to be present.* If they be not, then "*faith* apart from works (*i.e.* charity) is barren" (James ii. 20); nor can a "man be justified by the *works* of the law, save through faith" (Gal. ii. 16): while reconciliation is a thing of nought if one be "moved away from the *hope* of the Gospel" (Col. i. 23). Similarly is it for other Christian "Graces." Lastly no man who is *impure* "hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Eph. v. 5). But let us now investigate more minutely the true meaning of Faith.

When our Lord summoned a few simple-minded fishermen and others to follow Him, and ordained that small group of missionaries to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, He demanded of them but one thing only, and that was Faith; a simple, "loyal and free confidence in Him. This was what made the difference between them and the careless crowd or the hostile Pharisee—that to them Christ was a beloved Master and Friend."* So too with newly converted converts, what was required of them was faith. "It is not strictly a Christian virtue," writes the eloquent author of *Ecce Homo;* "it is the virtue required of one who wishes to become a Christian. For the test of there being any real goodness in a man's heart is Faith. He who, when goodness is impressively put before him exhibits an instinctive loyalty to it, starts forward to take its side, trusts himself to it, such a man has faith, and the root of the matter is in such a man."† The Kingdom of Heaven as preached by Christ and His Apostles was an invitation to "all such as possessed any natural loyalty to goodness, enthusiasm enough to join a great cause, and devotion enough to sacrifice something to it." ‡

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews defines Faith as "the assurance of things hoped for, the

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* *Ecce Homo*, p. 75 (small ed.). † *Ecce Homo*, p. 63.
‡ *l.c.*, 64.

proving of things not seen"* and proceeds to illustrate it by recording several instances of persons mentioned in the Old Testament, such as Abraham, who acted in Faith on God, not seeing what the issue of their acts might be, but fully believing that all things would turn out well for them, as God should will it.

But why should they have believed so implicitly on God, or why should we believe "that to them that love God all things work together for good"†? It is because we think or feel sure we have good and sufficient *reasons* for believing Him. Hence Faith is a *reasonable trust* upon God. If we, as adults, endowed with at least common sense, believe all we hear from fallible men, without enquiry or troubling ourselves to investigate the likelihood of their telling us the truth or not, such belief is culpable credulity and not Faith. If, however, we go back to childhood, we admit that a little child has no power nor will to investigate, and so accepts all it is told by its parents and elders, as absolute truth. This may be called "innocent credulity:" and our Lord was particularly condemnatory upon anyone who should attempt to impose upon such belief, or should offend one such little one.‡ But when we cease to be children, and pass out of that state and grow into

* (*Revised Version*) Heb. xi. 1. † Rom. viii. 28.
‡ Matt. xviii. 6.

adults, we are in a position to believe on other grounds. Instinct and Reason will guide us in our accepting the Truth, while the two together constitute the basis of Faith or a loyalty to God and His Christ. Hence the constitution of Faith is the acceptance of truth by the understanding or reason and the emotional instinct of the heart to cleave to what is good, pure, and loving, when presented to us. The result issues in a loving trust in God as our Heavenly Father, and a pure loyalty to Him as our Heavenly King in Christ Jesus; and hence it comes to pass that all who will have Faith are entitled to become members of His Kingdom.

Faith, however, is something more than a merely tacit and inactive acquiescence in the truth. The question remains, What must we *do* to be saved? and the answer is twofold. "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved;"* but at the same time comes the reminder that "we must all work out our salvation in fear and trembling," for "Faith apart from works is dead."† It is by Faith that we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and by Faith are we enabled to overcome the world, besides its giving us the entry into the Kingdom of Heaven.

St. John says, "Whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that

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* Acts xvi. 31. † James ii. 26.

hath overcome the world, *even* our faith. And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"* Faith here represents that loyalty to, or enthusiasm for good which is awakened in the loving heart which has once learnt to look to Jesus, to revere His character, and which has resolved to imitate Him, come what may; and, if needs be, to die for Him.

But it is worth while briefly to consider the reason why Faith enables us not only to overcome the world but the flesh as well.

It is because we recognize God's will in moral and physical laws; not only in "the laws of health," but in those of Love, Mercy, Forgiveness, &c. We recognize their divine origin, because when we practice them we at once experience how good they are. Our Lord said, "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak for myself."†

We have no more distinct proof than practical experience, and before we have had that experience, we had learnt enough of God and His Christ to have faith in them, and on that faith we proceed to practise; and as soon as we become pure in body and soul and exercise charity, we instantly "see God" and are "Begotten of Him."

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* 1 John v. 4, 5. † John vii. 16, 17.

Thus is it that Faith overcometh the world and all that is bad in it: while we must remember that it is by loyalty to our King and Master that we do all this. Christ succeeded in binding men together in the bonds of Christian love, but it was by first binding them to Himself, as he said, "If I be lifted up from the earth I will draw all men unto myself."*

Dr. Channing has beautifully expressed his view of Faith, with which I cordially agree, and will therefore reproduce his words†—"What is Faith, and what is its use? To believe in Christ is to receive and cherish those great truths, from which a pure life flows,—by which the mind is strengthened to withstand evil, to overcome inward and outward foes, and to press forward to Perfection. The value of Faith lies in its power over the character,—in the force of holy purpose, in the enlargement of philanthropy,—in the union of the mind to God,—to which it is fitted to exalt us. In other words, Faith is a *means*, and Obedience is the END. What is it to believe in Christ? I answer: It is to believe that He and his religion came from God, and to follow out in practice this conviction. It is to recognize a divine excellence and authority in his Precepts, and resolutely to adopt them as our Rule of Life. It is to see a divine purity in his Character, and resolutely to make it our model. It

* John xii. 32.

† *The Perfect Life*, p. 250.

is to be assured that under his guidance we shall attain to Perfection, and to forsake all other guides for this inestimable Good. It is to believe in the promises which He has made to all forms of holiness, and under this conviction to cultivate all. It is to believe that the pure in heart shall see God, and under this conviction to cleanse the thoughts, imagination and desires. It is to believe that the merciful shall find mercy, and the forgiving be forgiven; and through this confidence to cherish a placable and affectionate virtue. It is to believe the promise, that if we ask we shall receive, and, under this persuasion, to seek earnestly God's Holy Spirit. In a word, Faith is to believe, that if we hear and do the words which Jesus spake, we shall be like the man who built his house upon the rock, and in this *confidence* to OBEY. I know nothing plainer than the true use of Faith. It is enjoined wholly for its practical influences, simply to aid and strengthen us to resist sin, and to encourage us to frame ourselves after that PERFECTION of Character which shines forth in the precepts and examples of Jesus."

Faith, however, not only enables us to overcome the World, the Flesh and the Devil, but it is through Faith alone that good works are done. Let us see this in the case of Forgiveness: and one might not unreasonably ask, what has that to do with Faith?

If, however, we turn to St. Luke's Gospel,* we find that one of the first duties incumbent upon the disciples, in consequence of their allegiance to Jesus, was to exhibit unlimited forgiveness to an erring brother as soon as he should repent:—"If thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him."† This staggered them. They doubtless thought of the saying, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," and could not reconcile this new doctrine with it. Sweet revenge and pride would clash with such teaching!

For once and only once did they venture to ask Jesus for help. "Lord increase our Faith." They had left all and followed Him; diseases, nay the very devils themselves, had become subject to their power working through faith, and yet they felt how hard a thing it was to overcome offences and to forgive a trespassing brother! Why is this? Because the inherited power of evil is, for the most part, stronger in us than what natural good there may be in man. Notice our Lord's remark. Without distinctly asserting that it is really easy to forgive sins in others, He compares that difficulty with one which is seemingly much harder, viz., to

* Luke xvii. 3, *seqq*. † Luke xvii. 3, 4.

throw a mountain into the sea. If therefore faith could do that, and their faith had already cast out diseases, surely they would see that to forgive could not be so very difficult after all.

The fact is that it is really a hard and difficult thing to see that the law of Forgiveness is better than the rule, "an eye for an eye." The ideas of recompense, of getting a *quid pro quo*, of insisting on one's legal rights regardless of cost or injury to others, and even of retaliation and revenge, are invariably the recognized principles of action among uncivilized and barbarous peoples, and still find a place in the unregenerate heart of all who have not grown to, if not the full, at least some measure of the stature of Christ. Well might the disciples exclaim, "Lord increase our Faith!"

But is Faith always regarded as the living practical thing which shows itself only by results of personal purity of heart and soul together with unmitigated love towards others? For such are the issues of that loyalty to Christ and enthusiasm for humanity, the spiritual laws of whose kingdom thus regulate the conduct of His faithful servants.

It has been well observed that while "it is true that the good man does good deeds, it is not necessarily true that he who does good deeds is a good man."* Conventional standards too often

* *Ecce Homo*, p. 55.

accept the latter as equally true with the former. Hence the Pharisees praying in the market-place were thought to be good men. How then did Christ eliminate the faithful from the faithless, the true from the hypocritical among those who would enter his Kingdom? "Christ did not go out of his way to choose his followers; the Call itself sifted them; the Call itself was the fan he bore in his hand."* It was a means of Natural Selection. "Those who listened to Him must be prepared to change all their prospects and to adopt a new mode of life . . . . it demanded a certain moral originality and strenuousness of self-regeneration which men find in the long run more burdensome than the severest physical endurances and austerities."†

Now many doubtless joined Him from misunderstanding the nature of His kingdom, and fancied temporal rewards and places of honour would be assured them. Such would soon find out their mistake, and so "the interested and mercenary would fall away from him. The Call which had acted as a test upon some directly, by requiring of them an effort which they were not prepared to make, would winnow away others more gradually as soon as it was understood to offer no prospects which could tempt a worldly mind. In this way

* *Ecce Homo*, p. 57. † *l.c.*, p. 58.

without refusing or excluding any who came to Him, Christ suffered the unworthy, *i.e.* those who would not show Him Faith, *to exclude themselves*. An appeal had been made to what was noblest in each; each had been summoned to shake off routine and convention; some were gathering strength to accomplish the feat, some abandoning the attempt in despair. According to the issue of the conflict each man's worthiness would appear. This then was the winnowing which Christ did among men. The Call itself was in his hand as a fan."*

By such means were genuine and false Faith differentiated by Natural Selection, or by the Call which, as the author of *Ecce Homo* says, was the fan which was in His hand.

Is there no necessity for a new Fan now? Is faith always the pure and genuine article which Jesus loves to recognize? Has not the name of "Faith" been given to the spurious imitation, Credulity? When Priests are called Fathers, the laity by implication become Children; such is a tacit admission that spiritually they are such; and such they will inevitably remain if they content themselves with the milk of the Gospel and never go on to eat stronger meat.† Their "Faith" is no longer the innocent credulity of little children, but

* *Ecce Homo*, p. 60.

† 1 Cor. iii. 2.

the culpable credulity of adults, and a slavish obedience to fallible authority.

Faith in others means simply the intellectual acceptance of the bald statement that Jesus Christ died on the Cross to save sinners from eternal damnation in hell, and the word "Done" is held up with gratitude in opposition to "Do" the (so to say) watchword of the party who strongly advocate the necessity of good works. Such apparently forget that of Faith, Hope and Love, Love is the greatest.

Others, isolating the reply of St. Paul to the jailer at Philippi, who asked, "What must I do to be saved?" namely, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,"* tell us that if we can but once say so much as "I believe," all will be right, and we shall be safe for ever in the everlasting arms of our Heavenly Father.

In other cases we find the Catholic faith to be n intellectual belief in abstract dogmas, as of the Doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, "which unless a man believe faithfully and keep undefiled he will without doubt perish everlastingly."†

Hence Faith is made to do duty for credulity, or for a sort of spiritual charm; in every such case it is

* Acts xvi. 30, 31.

† I shall consider the Athanasian Creed in the last chapter of this book.

simply a barren, formal or dead belief, for it does not evince itself in works of love.

True *faith* is, therefore, a very different thing from *belief*. Creeds appeal solely to the intellect, but Faith rests on the heart. Creeds have done more than political quarrels to separate mankind and make them bitter foes. True faith ever shows itself by works of love; and such is the Silver Cord which can and let us hope will hereafter bind all men into one true living Brotherhood, which Christ came to form. For such is the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatever a man may *believe*, if he have not *faith* he is none of His.

Faith, however, is not confined to this world. All I have said hitherto concerns man as he is here. Such was the limitation of the faith of the disciples who asked for an increase of it that they might be able to forgive seventy times seven. But we look forward to a future life. I do not purpose reviewing the arguments for or against a future existence; but assume that we shall live again. There are, I fully believe, good and reasonable grounds for accepting the belief, and I shall do so now. As I have said we know of no higher life than the Christian life here, so we know of no higher form of faith than a full assurance that the best life we can spend here is a guarantee of a better hereafter.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT IS REGENERATION?

"Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the Regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."—*Matt.* xix. 28.

HAVING now arrived in our review of the so-called scheme of Redemption at the condition and requisites of a man who would enter the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, that is, become a Christian, and who thereby is assured of an inheritance in another dispensation hereafter, we find this new state called by the term Regeneration, and that it is a term applicable both to the establishment of the New Covenant and to the New-Born Subject of our Heavenly King. Let us then consider these two applications of this word, Regeneration.

The word Regeneration occurs twice in the New Testament; once in St. Matthew's Gospel and again in St. Paul's Epistle to Titus where he speaks of "the washing of regeneration;"* but in St. John's Gospel, Our Lord in his conversation with Nicodemus declares that "except a man be

* Titus iii. 5.

born anew (or, *from above*) he cannot see the Kingdom of God;"* while the same evangelist tells us what are the characteristics of those who are begotten of God.†

It is not difficult to gather from our Lord's words and the passages referred to, what He meant by "The Regeneration." It is simply the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth, or Christianity; while those who are regenerate are all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, have faith in Him, who have been baptized and are Christians in heart and practice as well as in name, and who are then what St. John calls "begotten of God."

We require first to know to what were the Jewish and Gentile converts to be dead, and whence is their new birth, respectively. We may summarize the former by saying that it was Legalism and Centralization of Worship on the one hand and total ignorance of Sin on the other.

To see this the clearer, it is necessary to consider what was the Jewish faith at the time of our Lord's coming. Mr. W. Robertson Smith‡ has shown us

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* John iii. 3; see also 1 Peter i. 23.

† 1 John ii. 29; iii. 9; iv. 7; v. 1, 4, 18.

‡ The details of this chapter as far as the regeneration of Judaism is concerned are almost entirely taken from his admirable work, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, to which the reader is referred.

that until the captivity there was what he calls the old popular worship in contradistinction to the Levitical, which did not exist till after the return.* That worship had been associated with innumerable shrines throughout the land, where God spoke to His people, and where everyone could bring his gifts of homage; and where priests were delegates of the people.

On the other hand, on the establishment of the Levitical regime at the reformation of Ezra, the worship of Israel became centripetal. The only recognized shrine was at Jerusalem, and the priests must be ordained of God alone. The danger which accompanied the old religion was that of *syncretism*, or as we say of gravitating to the idolatrous worship of the neighbouring peoples. The dangers which the new worship incurred and rapidly fell into, were rigid exclusiveness, the substitution of the letter for the spirit and the inordinate increase of the outward and ceremonial to the sacrifice of the inward and spiritual. These with the superadded "traditions" were "the burdens grievous to be borne" which our Lord charged the lawyers as having laid upon men.† It was from this system of Legalism which St. Paul is never tired of telling his readers that Christianity has freed us.‡

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* Smith, *l.c.*, 208 *seqq.* † Luke xi. 46.

‡ Rom. iv. 20 and see Smith, *l.c.*, 314.

On the other hand the fundamental principles of Christianity had existed in the old popular worship which took its rise in the monotheism of Abraham and the Law of Mount Sinai; its spirit could breathe freely in the less restricted air of the older religious atmosphere, and found vent in the healthy aspirations of the Psalms and the Prophets.

It must not be supposed however that such was at all approaching the perfection of Christ's religion. The old religion was local, temporal, crude and at times even barbarous. There was no high moral standard.* These defects Christ utterly repudiated, while yet rebuilding the new spiritual temple on the foundations of the old. He made no attempt to *develop* a new religion out of Legalism, nor even out of the prophetical teaching pure and simple. It was *a starting afresh* from the old standpoints of Moses and Abraham. Hence it was a Rejuvenescence rather than a development; nay, still better, a Regeneration. He *could not* have developed Christianity out of the religious system of His day: because the principles which He came to lay down were diametrically opposite to it in character. The Jewish religion was exclusive and conservative. Its object had been to make Israel visibly different from all other nations; † whereas

* The "First Legislation," as Mr. Smith calls it, is found in Ex. xxi.—xxiii., *l.c.*, p. 316, 336.

† Smith, *l.c.*, 268.

Christ would have all the world alike in the eye of a common Heavenly Father. Hence arose the intense hatred in the Jew for the human race; but this had to be replaced by an intense enthusiasm for all men, as God is no respecter of persons. He at once proceeds to break down the barriers or "wall of partition between Jew and Gentile," and makes religion universal. Socialism is replaced by universalism; while Legalism or a conservative keeping to the letter, is abolished for a liberal and spiritual freedom of the soul. In fact, the whole tendency of legalism was to stereotype the religious life of Israel;* and no fresh religious start or development, at least in the direction of spirituality, was possible. A *new beginning* must be made.

Although we must admit a true spiritual element to have pervaded the nation more or less since the Captivity—for natural instincts are truer than artificial rules, and will assert themselves—it is, I think a matter of some question whether the state of thought and feeling which gave rise to the Hebrew Psalter had not become largely effete in our Lord's day, for at least no such another was produced since the close of the Hebraic books; while the Scribes and Pharisees had come to regard the prophetic writings as simply adjuncts to the law and of a subordinate value. Not that the law was without

* Smith, *l.c.*, 139.

value, though "it never actually supplied the religious needs of Israel; it served to direct the religious attitude of the people, to prevent them from turning aside into devious paths and looking for God's help in ways that might tempt them to forget His spiritual nature and fall back into heathenism."* Let us then, enquire what were the characteristic features of the religion of Israel before the captivity, from which the Regeneration took its rise. "The ideal of the Old Testament is a dispensation in which all are prophets. 'Would that all the people of Jehovah were prophets,' says Moses in Num. xi. 29, 'and that Jehovah would put his spirit upon them.'" For, "the essential grace of the prophet is a heart purged of sin, and entering with boldness into the inner circle of fellowship with Jehovah. . . . The knowledge and fear of Jehovah is the sum of all prophetic wisdom, but also of all religion; and the Old Testament spirit of prophecy is the forerunner of the New Testament spirit of sanctification"† foretold by Joel when he said "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."‡ We see the ful-

* Smith, *l.c.*, p. 312, 313. † *l.c.* 284.
‡ Joel ii. 28. See also Isa. li. 7, 16.

filment of this expressed in the words of our Lord, "This is Life Eternal, that they should know thee the only true God and him whom thou didst send, *even* Jesus Christ."* Christianity is essentially a spiritual religion, and we thus see that to recover this spirituality it must go back and drink of that same spiritual drink which the forefathers of Israel imbibed.†

Similarly in regard to worship, simplicity characterizes its true spirit. Of all the ceremonies then existing, Christ adopted but two, Baptism and a "meal,"‡ "The Lord's Supper." The religious worship in Israel prior to the captivity was characterized by a simpler ritual and more primitive childlike faith in Jehovah. Religion with the people of old was part and parcel of every day life. Holiday meant Holy day. "In the old worship all was spontaneous. . . . Religion in its sacrificial form, was a part of common life, which no one deemed it necessary to reduce to rule. . . . . The sacrificial feasts are still the consecration of natural occasions of joy; men eat, drink, and make merry before God. The sense of God's favour, not the sense of sin, is what rules at the sanctuary. But," the author adds, "the unification of the sanctuary already tended to break up this old type of religion. Worship ceased to be an everyday thing, and so it ceased to be the

* John xvii. 3. † See 1 Cor. x. 4. ‡ *Ecce Homo*, 162.

expression of every day religion."* "In the old law the worship of feasts and sacrifices is the natural consecration, in act, of a simple, happy society, nourished by Jehovah's good gifts in answer to the labour of the husbandman, and cemented by a regard for justice and habits of social kindliness."†

Now Christianity re-acquired a good deal of its spirituality and simplicity by reverting to this primitive condition, and so recovered its lost freshness. And what is here characteristic of the *nation*, now becomes the necessary features of the *individual;* and by saying, "except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,"‡ our Lord expresses this fundamental principle of Regeneration as concerning both the individual convert and the Kingdom of Heaven itself. But at the same time we must remember that worship with the Hebrews of old was a very different thing from a true Christian worship. "To us it is a spiritual thing. We lift up our hearts and voices to God in the closet, the family, or the Church, persuaded that God, who is a spirit, will receive in every place the

* Smith, *l.c.*, 379. Compare St. Paul's remark showing how the Christian religion should affect the entire life:—"Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.)

† Smith, *l.c.*, 346. ‡ Matt. xviii. 2.

worship of spirit and of truth. But this is strictly a New Testament conception, announced as a new thing by Jesus to the Samaritan woman, who raised the question as to the disputed prerogative of Zion or Gerizim as the place of acceptable worship. Under the New Covenant neither Zion nor Gerizim is the Mount of God. Under the Old Testament it was otherwise. Access to God—even to the spiritual God—was limited by local conditions. . . . We can draw near to God in every act of prayer in the heavenly sanctuary, through the new and living way which Jesus has consecrated by His blood. But the Old Testament worshipper sought access to God in an earthly sanctuary which was for him as it were the meeting place of heaven and earth. Such holy points of contact with the divine presence were locally fixed, and their mark was the altar, where the worshipper presented his homage, not in purely spiritual utterance, but in the material form of an altar-gift. . . . Prayer without approach to a sanctuary is not recognized as part of the 'service of Jehovah.'"*

All this, however, was abolished by the centralization of the Levitical worship, which became representative and thereby made local shrines superfluous.

While therefore Christianity passed over this

* Smith, *l.c.*, 223, 4.

latter development and came back to the Old Religion, so far as it recognized the presence of God wherever there was an altar, it expands that idea in recognizing God to be present everywhere and approachable at all times and all places without a sanctuary at all. This latter advancement was mostly beyond the conceptions of the prophets, as with but few exceptions they still clung to Zion. Most of their utterances of a more spiritual condition of things than had hitherto prevailed are hampered by the idea of localization and restriction. Jerusalem was still to have the throne of the Messiah, who should reign over his people from thence. Moreover the religion of the prophets was *national.** Their warnings, denunciations, as well as their invitations to righteousness are always addressed to the people as a nation. But the essential feature of Christianity is that it appeals to *individuals;* and since nations are composed of individuals, the religion of the nation arises out of that of its collective units.

But there was an earlier period, before Israel was, when Jehovah was the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. As a Regeneration, Christianity leaves on one side Legalism and traditions, retraces the steps of the development of the old religious life of the Hebrew nation, stopping, as it

* See Smith, *l.c.*, 346.

were, to gather up all that is good and spiritual on the way, that had been dropped by the prophets and the Psalmists, still travelling backwards till Mount Sinai is reached and the moral law on the tables of stone is once more carried off. One step farther backwards from Moses' time and Abraham at last is found.

He who took this spiritual journey in order to reintroduce "The Regeneration" to mankind might well and forcibly say "Before Abraham was I AM."

If the Jews, therefore, who were contemporaries of our Lord were to be regenerate, they had much to unlearn. Legalism had to be abandoned and conservative exclusiveness begetting and begotten of hate must be broken down and the Gentile admitted on equal footing with them in the New Jerusalem. Their egoistic religion, therefore, must change. Externals must yield to internals. Trust in ceremony must merge into Faith in God. Justification by the law must be replaced by justification by faith. The new catholic and altruistic religion at once broke down the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. The prejudices of ages must crumble away. The ceaseless hate of the human race must die out, while an enthusiasm for it must grow and flourish in its stead.

Such was a regeneration indeed! And no better

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* John viii. 58.

example of the change has ever figured before the world than he who had lived in the rules of the straitest sect of Pharisees, a legalist to the core, and who persecuted Christians to the death ; namely, the Great Apostle St. Paul, who by the Divine will was enabled to free himself from the trammels of the law and became the great Missionary of Love to the Gentiles.

Such then was the regeneration which Christ speaks of in the words which head this chapter, as applicable to the Jews. What was it for the Gentiles? As with the Jew, so with the heathen, his regeneration was both *personal* and *altruistic*. He did not know sin, his ἁμαρτία against Father Jove had to become παράδοσις against "Our Father which is in heaven." Conscience had to be re-born. Some poor semblance of a sense of duty had existed in the obligation of fulfilling the behests of the Gods, but such sacrifices as he offered, like the ritual observances of Jewish legalism, had really nothing moral about them. Nor was vice immoral any more than hatred and revenge. Nay, too often had debauchery the sanction of religion. In fact, with the heathen world, as the author of *Ecce Homo* remarks, "Conscience had taken the wrong side." But the idea of Purity and Love was not utterly expunged. Like the prophets in Israel, the Philosophers of Greece were living witnesses—at least in their utterances—of the "Beauty of

Holiness." The abandonment of the "works of the flesh"* as St. Paul calls them, and the entering on a new life of purity was the personal regeneration for the heathen.

His altruistic regeneration was very much akin to that of the Jew, but perhaps more readily effected. Like the Jew he considered all foreigners enemies, but the political conditions of the time, by which a vast number of nationalities had become merged into one empire, rendered the making religion universal an easier task.

The germ of the idea of a universal Brotherhood was not entirely unknown. The altruistic regeneration therefore partook more of the nature of a sudden expansion by the removal of the barriers of exclusiveness. There was no need to go back to first principles in the case of Love and begin again with family affection (*φιλία*). *φιλανθρωπία* as "clan-affection" was all on the way, but could not become developed into a universal *ἀγάπη* till Jesus had been lifted up and so drew all men, first to Himself, and then to one another. Such then was the regeneration of the heathen.†

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* Gal. v. 19, 20.

† This will be further treated of in Chapter X.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT IS REGENERATION?

(Continued.)

"Except a man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—*John* iii. 5.

We must now enter upon the much-debated subject of Baptismal Regeneration. The ordinary Christian belief is founded on the idea that unbaptized infants are "born in sin and are children of wrath," and that God's gracious mercy shown to them in baptism is generally* necessary to salvation. It has been thought by some that unless they were baptized, children would inevitably perish in everlasting torments in hell. Our Church of England is more tolerant in not saying positively that such is the case; but by stating that children who have been "baptized and dying before they commit actual sin are undoubtedly saved,"† it would seem to imply the converse for those who die unbaptized; and at least treats them with the indignity of denying them the Service of the Burial of the Dead.

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* *fere* in Latin.

† Rubric at the end of the *Ministration of Publick Baptism of Infants.*

Now the first question to be asked is, are all children, whether of Christian parents or not, born in sin and children of wrath? Whence does this expression come? We shall find it in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians,* and it refers to adult heathens who had been guilty of the grossest of immoralities. For the heathen had been born, generation after generation, into a world the ideas of which can only be regarded in the light of Christianity as a mass of sin and moral corruption. Neither of these two phrases, then, can be applicable to unconscious infants of Christian or other parents in the sense in which they were written by St. Paul.

There is but little doubt that the application of the terms "born in sin" and "children of wrath" to our own children, may be attributed to the false notions about Original Sin, and that infants are supposed in some unknown way to be "guilty"; for we pray in the Baptismal service that the "infant coming to Thy Holy Baptism, may receive remission of *his* sins by spiritual regeneration." Original taint is their misfortune no doubt, as I have explained already:† but sin there cannot be, for it does not exist till "law" is known.

If, however, we would understand what the spiritual condition of little children "who know

* Eph. ii. 3. † p. 73.

not the law" really is, we cannot have a higher authority than that of Jesus Christ Himself. Let us see how He regarded little unbaptized Jewish children of His day.

St. Matthew records of Him as follows:—*"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven? And He called a little child unto Him and set him in the midst of them, and said, 'Verily I say unto you, except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me. But whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come, but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh! . . . See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven (For the Son of Man

* Matt. xviii. 1, *seqq.*

came to save that which was lost). . . . Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. . . . Then were brought unto him little children that He should lay His hands on them and pray; and His disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;* and He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands upon them."†

Few things are more touching in the life of Jesus Christ than His fondness for little children; and from His remarks about them we can gather a special cause for His delight in taking them up in His arms and blessing them; for He saw much more in them than we do generally. In His eyes, which were too pure to behold iniquity, they were the type of all that is good, and even all that is holy, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven itself. "Who shall be greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?" asked His disciples, wondering what place of honour each of them might be entitled to receive when their Lord and Master should sit upon His throne. "Verily I say unto you, except ye turn and become as little children ye shall not even enter the kingdom of Heaven." Strange reply! "Do not expect honours" — He might

* Matt. xix. 13, 14. † Mark x. 16.

have said—"Nay, look not for even a foothold in my kingdom as long as such pride and selfish thoughts as ye now have are in your hearts. Place of honour, indeed! I tell you this little child is preferred before you in my kingdom. If you would be great, there is but one way, Be humble. If you have talents, consecrate them to God and boast not of them! If you have wealth, do good with it and not squander it upon your lusts, and then you shall have treasure in Heaven. If you have position, make it a means of blessing to those who have it not. But pride yourselves on nothing, or I will have none of you. Aye, further, beware lest you cause by your bad example one of these precious little treasures to fall, which are so dearly beloved of my Father and me! Alas! offences must come. The world is so bad that their purity will surely ere long receive a shock; their implicit faith will be rudely shattered by hypocrisy and deceit. But woe to that man who first is guilty of the act! I tell you it were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he be cast into the depths of the sea than he should be the first to cause one of these little ones to stumble.

"True, most true is it that the Son of Man is come to save that which is lost; and that too many of my sheep are already lost in ignorance and sin. Beware then, lest you increase the number by

offending one of these my lambs, for it is not the will of my Heavenly Father that any one of these little ones should perish."

Such is the general sentiment of this passage of Scripture which I have just quoted. When, therefore, we find our Lord fondling little children, blessing them and telling His disciples to cherish them, "to feed His lambs," does not the expression sound somewhat strange when we really consider what it implies, that these little children are all "born in sin and the children of wrath"?

One feels inclined to ask is there not some mistake here? Some people, I repeat, even go so far as to believe that little children even before they can speak, much less know what are evil and sin, are doomed to perish everlastingly, and that had it not been for Christ's death redeeming them from that awful curse they undoubtedly would do so. Vain distortion of the Truth! Does not Christ tell us exactly the reverse; that little children are beloved of their heavenly Father; that He wills not the death of a single one of them; nay, more, that of such is the Kingdom of Heaven?

Whence, then has arisen this astounding mistake? It is apparently thus. Those who have advanced this horrible idea have confounded together two things which are utterly distinct, and which may be distinguished as acts done with the *consciousness* of sin and those done in *unconsciousness* of it. "I had

not known sin but by the law," says St. Paul. That means that no one can be called guilty for doing anything whatever if he has never had the possibility of learning that such an act was wrong. It is the confusion between the conscious immorality of a wicked man who knows better but *will* not do it, and, not only the *non-moral* acts of a little child unconscious of evil, but also the *tendency* to do wrong inherited in their nature, or original taint, for which they are not responsible. We are born into this world with very different physical constitutions. Some of us grow up in childhood more prone to go wrong than others. Some, indeed, never seem to do wrong, so weak are their natural proclivities to naughtiness. If the former are to be styled naturally "children of wrath," why might not the others be called naturally "children of grace"? We have no need to go to theology for an interpretation of these obvious facts. It is the study of physiology which explains it, as I have already mentioned in a previous chapter.* Only let us remember that no one is guilty for being born with what he cannot help possessing. Herein lies the error of some persons who attribute to the words "born in sin and children of wrath" a meaning which they cannot bear, that we can possibly be sinners before we have sinned. We are

* p. 73.

really nothing of the sort. Our blessed Lord distinctly lays down the principle that children are all born into this world, not as God's enemies, but His little treasures. So far from even saying that they are children of wrath He says, "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." What higher title could they bear? Nay, more, He says that no man or woman is worthy of a place in that kingdom until they have thrown off their worldliness, learnt to exceed the Scribes and Pharisees in true righteousness, but not in that of the Law, and humbled themselves and become like little children.

Now, when we keep in mind those two occasions on which Christ compared those who enter the Kingdom of Heaven to little children, as well as the fact of His calling His own disciples themselves by that title; and again when we find St. Paul and St. John both making use of the very same expression when writing to the members of the Churches, we cannot but feel there must be some significant meaning in the term as applied to adult Christians.

Christ's words almost always convey some general principle, wrapped up as it were in a sentence which may have been uttered merely to point His teaching on some particular occasion; and in these words there is a most important one, which when thoughtfully considered throws a great light upon the many principles of Christianity, as a grand scheme for regenerating the world.

First, then, what is implied by "the Kingdom of Heaven"? We have already seen that it almost invariably means Christianity. Simply then, to be a Christian in the proper sense of the term; nay, to be the very highest in God's estimation, you must become as a little child. One cannot put any other interpretation upon Christ's words than this. And if this be true, it is evidently by no means unimportant to ascertain what Christ meant by humbling oneself, by being converted or turning, and so becoming like a little child; for this is individual Regeneration.

Putting this practical duty for the present on one side, let us discover the principle involved in Christ's words. It is this. That any one who would be a follower of Christ, would be a Christian, or would enter the Kingdom of Heaven—for it matters not what form of expression be used—that condition which he is desirous of obtaining is simply a restoration to the primitive state of innocence, or a freedom from all pollution by evil deeds, characteristic of little children before they can sin, and of primitive man as represented to us in the allegory of Adam and Eve. But there cannot be an absolutely identical similarity between a repentant convert and a little child; for while the latter is innocent of all evil and unconscious of sin; an adult cannot be. He may know of every kind of moral evil in the world, for he must be *in* it; but there is no necessity

for him to be *of* it. He may repent and become as innocent and totally free from all taint of moral evil ever after as they are now; but at the same time, be thoroughly alive to the existence of evil in multitudinous forms round about him. He may be as harmless as a dove, yet all the while as wise as a serpent.

We, Christians by birth, are said to enter our state of salvation at Baptism, *i.e.*, we are at least recognized then as Christians in the eyes of all others on that occasion. So far is baptism an outward and visible sign of our adoption into the Family of God, and we become members of the visible Church of Christ. If we be called children of Grace and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, these terms can at least mean this. But if the words seem to convey a more spiritual meaning, that, for example, in consequence of baptism we have a spiritual right to go to heaven hereafter, I know of no warrant for the idea in Scripture whatever. If by becoming a "child of God" we are thought to have acquired a more spiritual nature than we had before, or to be assured of some special blessing from on high, as the gift of the Holy Ghost, I know of no passage where such was granted as a consequence of baptism.*

* It should be observed that the visible manifestation of the Holy Ghost when falling on the converts as recorded in the New Testament was never as a result of baptism, but of

The fact is, as it at least appears to me, that there is a fundamentally wrong idea underlying the popular theology, and which is based on a misconception of the terms "Salvation," "Kingdom of Heaven," "Child of God," &c. These, I repeat, do not refer to a future state after our death, *except by implication* as I have explained above,* but to this life, so that if for Salvation and the Kingdom of Heaven we read Christianity; for child of God substitute, say, "a perfect Christian," and instead of the "Answer" in our Church Catechism, "My Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven," we paraphrase it thus: "Whereby I was recognized publicly as a member of Christ's visible Church,

Faith and Obedience (Acts v. 32). The Holy Spirit fell sometimes before, sometimes after the ceremony, and in several cases He is not mentioned at all. (As instances of baptism without the Holy Ghost being given until the laying on of hands see Acts viii. 14-17, 38 and xix. 1-7.) No mention is made of the Holy Ghost in the case of Lydia (Acts xvi. 15); nor of the jailer of Philippi (Acts xvi. 33), nor of Crispus and his household (Acts xviii. 8). St. Paul, however, received the Holy Ghost first and was baptized afterwards (Acts ix. 17); so was Cornelius and his household (Acts x. 44, 48). Lastly, when our Lord gave the injunction to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned;"† no mention is here made of the reception of the Holy Ghost as a consequence of the convert being baptized.

* p. 122. † Mark xvi. 15, 16.

and that they undertook to instruct me in all that was necessary to make me hereafter a child of God and worthy of the title 'begotten of God,' as St. John describes such, so that I be a fitting heir to God's promises in this world and the world to come," I think we can extract a more profitable meaning than that which is generally received. Baptism is obviously no guarantee for a godly life, or the introduction of God-parents would have been superfluous.

What then is our actual state? We are born into the world more or less physiologically burdened with "original sin" as it is wrongly called: but we are not necessarily thereby "conceived and born in sin," as our Prayer Book tells us.

Baptism is the outward and visible sign of our adoption into the family of God at once, though God and His Christ had never recognized us otherwise. The public ceremony is a witness to the world that our parents and god-parents undertake to bring us up in the fear of God and the principles of the Christian Faith, till we are old enough to undertake the responsibility of Christian duties and make our public profession when we are confirmed that we are willing to do so. What our duty is, is expressed in the sentence "work out our salvation in fear and trembling." If it be thought that an infant receives the Holy Ghost on being baptized, which is prayed for, as well as the remission of its sins (which it cannot have com-

mitted) I know of no evidence of such a prayer ever having been made or answered in the New Testament. Wherever it is recorded that the Holy Ghost was given, it was invariably in consequence of *Faith* or obedience, which an infant cannot possibly have or show, and not in consequence of Baptism; and as far as our experience of human life can inform us, we have none to prove that the Holy Ghost has been given to an infant when it received its baptism.

I therefore accept Mr. Spurgeon's definition, as follows:—"*Baptism is the avowal of Faith;* the man was Christ's soldier, but now in baptism he puts on his regimentals. The man believed in Christ, but his faith remained between God and his own soul.* In baptism he says to the baptizer 'I believe in Jesus Christ;' he says to the Church, 'I unite with you as a believer in the common truths of Christianity;' he saith to the onlooker, 'Whatever you may do, as for me, I will serve the Lord.' It is the avowal of faith."†

If, then, Baptismal Regeneration in the full

* Such was the condition of Cornelius, before he sent for Peter, when the angel said to him, "Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God" (Acts x. 4). Then, after having sent for Peter, and while that apostle was speaking, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. Then it was that Peter commanded them to be baptized. Compare the case of the jailer at Philippi (Acts xvi. 31-33 and references given above).

† *Baptismal Regeneration*, p. 28.

ecclesiastical and sacramental sense be based on erroneous ideas, is there no regeneration required for Christians at all? Most assuredly there is. Few are there amongst men and women who do not continually need to become regenerate! Who has succeeded perfectly in working out his salvation in fear and trembling, and has never added anything but grace to grace to his character, or virtue to virtue, nor tampered with his sanctification, nor broken his vows to God and his Christ, nor, in a word, "fallen from grace"? If there be, then, a necessity—and one may ask who has not felt the necessity in himself—and if Regeneration means becoming like little children; we ask what are the characteristics of a little child that we have to resemble, and what is the nature of the duty we have to perform to become like them? Is there not implicit faith in all that is told them? Has not a little child perfect trust in everyone that is older than itself? And we must be as children in the sight of God our Father. What does a child's pure heart know of impurity? What can an infant know of sin?

But how soon are these beautiful traits marred and blurred, partly by inherent and hereditary tendencies, which soon show themselves; partly by contact with others who are unscrupulous in exposing their own faults and thus rudely shock the innocent mind; but woe to him who thus first offends one of these little ones. Is it often that the

pure faith which a child has at first in its parents' love is to be found transplanted in after life upon a heavenly soil or flourishing as implicit confidence in a higher Father's love? Is that innocence and purity of heart which is always discoverable in a child likewise to be found in after life; no lust? no duplicity? one need not answer such questions. Were not all liars, cheats, hypocrites, profligates amongst us—all of them—innocent and baptized infants themselves once? But are not these things which we see in a little child just those traits which characterized Christ, our great Example? His trust and faith on his Father were unbounded. He knew that He could commit Himself to His God, because, "He judgeth righteously." "Not my will but Thine be done" was the rule of His life upon earth. Again, purity of heart and soul was never so utterly unsullied as in Him. Every temptation glanced from Him like the steel point from the surface of a diamond. The soil of His heart was utterly uncongenial for even the germ of sin to grow there. So too is a little child's heart. It does not know what evil means and so cannot respond to its suggestion: and such in brief is the character of the true Christian; the more child-like he or she is in purity and in all other Christian graces the more Christ-like will they be and the nearer will they approach that standard which Jesus could see in a little child. For when He

took them up in His arms He could see in them the type of that Heaven upon earth which He came down from Heaven itself to establish. He could look back to the time when, as it were, counselling with His Father in the realms above, they resolved to create a being who should bear the impress of their own likeness, a likeness now only to be discovered in the character of Christ, in little children, and in the fully regenerate sons of God.

Before concluding this chapter, it is perhaps advisable to remember that purity and innocence are specially, and some perhaps would add, only, applicable to *very young* children. Hereditary taints are so strong in us that an opposite picture might with a fair show of reason be drawn, as Dr. Maudesley has done.* After all it *is* the ideal† which we mostly look for. Christ Himself may be called the concrete perfection of Humanity; but when we say we love Him in every man, it is the ideal we recognize: and young children, before they can know the rudiments of right and wrong and before the influence of Original Taint can be felt, are similarly concrete types of purity and innocence; though afterwards it may be the ideal only we can recognize even in them.

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* *Body and Will*, p. 250. † See *infra*, p. 206.

CHAPTER X.

WHO ARE CHRISTIANS?

"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."—*St. John* xiii. 34.

"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."—*St. Matt.* v. 8.

In the sixth chapter we discovered that Faith was the requisite for everyone to possess who was willing to become a member of Christ's kingdom, and that this must be accompanied by repentance for sin; when he would be assured of God's forgiveness. He must then receive the Sacrament of Baptism in accordance with our Lord's injunction, when he will be regenerate and become a true subject in the kingdom of Heaven. The question, however, still remains, what must the Christian *do* to show that he is a Christian in practice as well as in name?

I will therefore endeavour to answer the question "Who are Christians?" in this chapter.

This question may seem at first sight a superfluous thing to ask, since Christianity has been in existence nearly two thousand years. But, when

we see what is called the visible Church of Christ on earth broken up into a legion of branches, such as the Roman Catholic, the English Protestant, the Lutheran, the Scotch, as well as the Wesleyan, Baptist, and other sects innumerable; and when we remember that each think that they alone are right and the true representatives of Christianity upon earth, the question does not seem to be so superfluous.

Moreover, besides such varieties among professing Christians, there are infidels of various kinds; agnostics, who say that God is unknown and unknowable; atheists and secularists who say that there is no proof of a personal God at all; and lastly there are some who recognizing the beauty of our Lord's moral teaching, misrepresent the true meaning of Christianity by charging it with superstitions which do not belong to it. Now all these, if they do not openly avow it, at least lead us to assume that they are severally the only correct teachers of religion. Surely, then, it is not only *not* superfluous but actually desirable, if not absolutely necessary, to ask ourselves who profess it, "What is Christianity, and what constitutes being a Christian? Christ, Christianity and Christian are three words obviously closely connected. Christ was the original founder of the religion which is called Christianity, and Christians are those who, at least, profess to believe in Him and to follow

His teaching. That definition is so far plain, and the answer to the question proposed is therefore narrowed down to the inquiry, "What did Christ teach?"

Before we attempt to discover what He taught, it is as well to be clear upon one point; and that is, that what we call the *doctrines* of Christianity, such as our Church holds,—in other words, Christian theology,—were *not* taught by Christ Himself. We do not find Him, for example, instructing His disciples in the mysteries of the Holy Trinity, nor even teaching them the doctrine of the Atonement as usually formulated. Doctrines, as our sixth and eighth articles assert, are to be *proved* from Holy Scripture; but the New Testament did not exist while Christ was on earth.

However true they may be, however logically and conclusively we may prove them from the Gospels and Epistles which we now possess, we must remember that doctrinal theology did not come into existence until long after Christ had ascended into heaven. Consequently if all creeds and theology as now formulated were swept away, Christianity and Salvation would still remain; for Christianity in the true sense of the word is something much simpler than theology. If it were not, how would the poor and ignorant fare? Theology is a matter for the head and the understanding to grapple with, Christianity as Christ taught it to the poor and simple-minded is a thing for the heart to feel and the will to practise.

This is why our Lord could and did appeal to the lowest and most ignorant of mankind, nay, to the very outcasts of society, the repentant prodigal or publican, and the conscience stricken Magdalen. It was amongst these that He specially went about doing good. Hence, the learned, the casuistical, the cynical scribe and the proud pharisee who thought that they only were or could be religious, because they fancied they understood the written formularies of the law, and said "this multitude which knoweth not the law are accursed,"* were themselves the very ones who were self-excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven; but the publicans and sinners went into that same kingdom preferred before them. Why was this? Because all such men and women who had had no bringing up in the hard and egoistic principles of legalism, and consequently still retained hearts susceptible of natural impulses, notwithstanding their faults, could feel and appreciate the loving sympathy of Jesus; whereas the lawyers and the pharisees thought religion was a mere understanding of the letter of the law together with a punctilious serving of it. So too is it now. Theology is a thing of the head, and will never save a man. Religion is a thing of the heart, and will never fail of its reward.

These few preliminary remarks will prepare us in our endeavour to find an answer to the question,

* John vii. 49.

"Who are Christians?" The verses I have selected for a heading to this chapter include two words which may be taken as representing the essential feature of the Christian character, and around which all other traits revolve. These are Purity and Love, and they typify the personal and altruistic features of Christianity, respectively. Moreover these two represent the most prominent ethical features of Christ's own personal character and teaching, namely, an unsullied purity of body and mind, accompanied by unmitigated Charity or Love, which is the keynote of all Christian harmony. Let us consider the latter first. The word is so familiar to us that we do not think, perhaps we do not know that it was not so familiar to men when Christ came, and that our Lord spoke the real truth when He said it was a *new* commandment to love one another.

Before His advent the Greek word for Charity or Love did not possess that meaning, nor does it occur at all in Greek literature. The Christian meaning of brotherly love was practically a new creation infused into the word *ἀγαπᾶν* "to regard," while Love or *ἀγάπη* (*Agape*) was coined.* It supplied a newly discovered want. What then was this love? Parents had long loved their children, husbands their wives, men and women their relations and friends, ages before Christ came; and yet He

* See *Ecce Homo*, p. 145.

said "a *new* commandment I give to you, that ye love one another?"

It is necessary, therefore, to go to the Greek original to discover the real meaning of our Lord, and I will select a passage which brings strikingly into contrast (though lost to the English reader) the two kinds of love of which I am speaking.

The reader will remember the occasion when Jesus, after his resurrection, asks Peter three times—"Lovest thou me more than these?"* and Peter answers thrice—"Thou knowest that I love thee." But let us observe this important fact. In the first and second questions Christ uses the verb *ἀγαπᾶν*, which signifies "to regard" or "to reverence," but not necessarily "to love personally" at all. To Peter this word sounds cold, so in reply he substitutes another word for "regard" or *φιλεῖν*, signifying "personal love."† Our Lord, therefore, could not misunderstand Peter. But the third time on asking this same question Jesus adopts the word which Peter had used, and which the disciple felt could alone fully represent his ardent personal attachment and love for his Lord.

What then did Christ mean by *ἀγαπᾶν* if *φιλεῖν* would not convey the purport of his question?

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* John xxi. 15-17.

† If the conversation took place in Aramaic and not Greek, there must have been a similar contrast; or it would not have been so pointedly maintained in the Greek version.

To understand it we must go back to investigate what was the general feeling on the subject of love and kindness amongst the Jews and heathens of old. It was simply this. It was a universal rule throughout the world that, excepting those of the same race, all other men were accounted enemies, just as it is with savages and all uncivilized peoples at this very day, and were systematically hated. Hence our Lord alluded to a well-recognized truth when He said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy.'"* In early conditions of society where tribes exist without the cohesion of a national bond, history is replete with the bitter quarrels, nay, hereditary hatreds which have reigned between them; and in some of the most degraded of savages man does not even respect others of his own family.

But Love, which is the very bond of Peace, first unites those, but only those, of the same family; and issues out of instinctive parental love. This in Greek was called *φιλανθρωπία*, another word which Christianity has widened into our term *philanthropy*. Then the clans or families unite to form nations, so that the development of love from the family circle up to the nation, where it becomes *patriotism*,† is a natural process. An instance familiar to all is seen

* Matt. v. 43. † See Maudesley, *l.c.*, p. 243.

in the history of the Israelites, from Abraham to the consolidation of the twelve tribes under Solomon.

Beyond the point of Nationality or Patriotism it never advanced. There Love was completely arrested. All foreign nations were called by the Greeks "Barbarians," a term of reproach because they could not understand their languages. They were treated as enemies solely because they were foreigners. It was the same with the Romans. The word *hostis*, at least in older Latin, meant *enemy* and *foreigner* alike. Similarly does the word *Rival* come from *rivus*, a river: and as a good illustration of the derivation, I quote the following passage from *The Nightless North*:*—

"Pello was the name of the place, and there was a considerable number of houses on both banks. Pello was the name of both villages, and on a Russian map you will find it marked on the Russian side, while on a Swedish map it is marked on the Swedish side. This is to be seen all down the Torneo; the Russian town on one side with its church, perhaps, and the Swedish town, with *its* church, on the other; both bearing the same name, but beyond that having nothing in common; indeed, rather the opposite, being very jealous of each other, for the Russian Finns and the Swedish Finns are not very good friends as a rule."

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* P. 164.

Now if we turn to the Jews, we find that their exclusiveness and pride in thinking themselves to be the only chosen race of God made them hate the external world or heathens still more. The Jew called them dogs, utterly despised and detested them.

Suddenly Christ appears upon the scene, and one of His very first commands, and one terribly startling to the men of that day was this:—I say unto you: "Love your enemies!"

We must remember that those few words, however trite they may seem to us, must have struck deep down into the heart of the proud Jews and stirred up most strangely mingled feelings within them. Startled at the suddenness of the strange edict; doubt whether their ears could really have heard aright; contempt at the supposed absurdity of it; indignation as their pride was touched; scorn as their hatred, already strong against the Gentiles, now found room to exert itself against Him.

But they had more to learn than that: not only were they to love their enemies, that is all foreigners, but also to be taught to believe that their own God was a God who loved their enemies as well as His own peculiar people. "What! Tell us Jews, the Children of Abraham that the God of Abraham of Isaac and of Jacob, the Lord *our* God, is the God of those Gentile dogs!" This indeed was odious to them to the last degree! No wonder the Gospel

of "Peace on Earth and Goodwill towards Men" soon proved to be to them a rock of offence.*

To teach the Jew all this, as did both Christ and his apostles, was a total subversion and annihilation of the belief of ages!

The same lesson was for the Gentile as for the Jew: for all Gentile nations hated each other and considered it lawful and right to attack, plunder, slay and destroy any foreign nation whatever; not because there had arisen any disagreement or *casus belli* whatever, but solely and simply because no treaty binding on each to respect the other existed.

But now *Love*, or rather, as the word ἀγάπη expreses it, *reverential respect*, was to take the place of Hate. This new word, now to be brought into general use, was to be the bond of peace which should link all mankind together, by breaking down the walls of partition, first between Jew and Gentile, and then between all Gentiles, so that henceforth all men could give the right hand of fellowship to one another as brothers in the Lord.

This is the only true Catholic—that is to say universal—religion of the world. It is the only true religion of Humanity, and is only to be fully realized when the prophecy shall be fulfilled when men shall "beat their swords into ploughshares and

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* See *The Perfect Life*, by Dr. Channing, III. "The Universal Father," p. 53, *seqq*.

their spears into reaping hooks and shall learn war no more."

This was the New Commandment. This *is* Christianity: and to love thus, is to be a Christian.

But now, how was this revolution in thought and practice to be brought about? Men cannot be made to love at command. No! It was not so much by any moral injunctions that He gave, as by His Personal and loving example that men instinctively followed.

There is innate, deeply imbedded in the human constitution what may be called *natural kindliness*.* It was a little spark hardly allowed even to flicker in the cold world of those days. If ever what we call a generous and kind act of sympathy was shown, at least to any one who was not of the same family, it was barely tolerated, and then only regarded with pitiful contempt. But let men be what they will, unless it has been utterly crushed out by habitual and ancestral brutality, there is that little germ lying dormant in the heart. It may be called the germ of Humanity. Christ the Son of Man knew it well; and at once gently fanned it into a flame of enthusiasm, first for Himself, and then for mankind in general. And, as soon as it was once seen it was recognized as beautiful, and perhaps wondered at, as having never been thought of before. But

* I am indebted to *Ecce Homo* for this expression and for some of the ideas in this chapter.

now once recognized, it required a name; so the early Christians called it *ἀγάπη*, a word quite unknown in any ancient heathen Greek literature whatever, and which we translate by the word *Charity* or *Brotherly love.*

And now, it will be easily understood why Christ asked Peter if he loved, or rather *reverenced* Him; for when we say we love mankind, we mean that we love Christ in every man; that is to say we reverence the *ideal man* in every human being.

Our blessed Lord has thrown a halo of sanctity round every human soul* by labouring amongst the poorest and the outcast and so teaching us a lesson never to be forgotten, much less despised, that the most abandoned sinner has a heart and a soul which are as precious in the Father's eyes as those of ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

And, now, it is nothing else than this spirit of love or Christian humanity which is the source of all that is good in man.

One, and the most important answer to the question "What is Christianity?" is, therefore, this:— It is natural kindliness fanned into a flame of enthusiasm for all mankind; and which unhesitatingly evinces itself in unselfish action on every occasion; and this is itself based upon a pure and enthusiastic love and admiration for Christ Himself.

* As the author of *Ecce Homo* has expressed it.

By what shall we be judged? By our head-knowledge? By our skilfulness in proving doctrines? The Bible does not say so; but what it *does* say is this:—"Come ye blessed of my Father, for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in. Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me."

Such is Love, and to act thus is to be a Christian.

But Christianity involves more than this. What I have briefly said refers to the positive side; and it stands out in strong contrast to the old Jewish laws, the burden of which ever was:—"Thou shalt not." It is *not* enough merely to abstain from injuring one's neighbour, or even one's enemy; for to be worthy of the name of Christian we must *do* him good, nay, we must love him. But besides this positive aspect, there is, I repeat, the negative side. The word "negative" comes from the Latin signifying to "deny" or "say no" to anything: and one great principle of Christianity, and which indeed issues out of love, is the *denying oneself*, the sacrificing oneself. On the other hand *selfishness*, which is the source of all moral evil whatever, exists wherever a man neglects or refuses to love his neighbour. In fact every one who professes Christianity, must regard himself as a "trustee of his own soul." Christianity regards every man

individually, as it were a "means"* to "an end," that end being not solely the good of self, but the good of others as far as one's powers avail, as well or even in preference. But if I make myself the sole end and object of my life on earth; allowing selfishness to usurp the place of self-sacrifice; then I shall be "abusing the means," sacrificing "the end," and am no true Christian. Let us hear what the Apostle says of selfishness:—"The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these:—"fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like. They which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law; and they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."†

These two summaries are tolerably complete: and I will briefly dwell on one example only, as specially bearing on that aspect of Christianity which I have been more particularly discussing; moreover it is one that is so thoroughly and universally ignored—I allude to that very common but un-Christian

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* See on the "abuse of means," *supra*, p. 63.

† Gal. v. 19-24.

thing—*a bad temper*. Bodily as well as mental vices, as revenge, are recognized as wrong; but with regard to exhibitions of bad temper, however much we may disapprove of them in others, it is universally forgotten that they are just as wrong. All kinds of sinful indulgence of the flesh or mind are simply the wrongful abuse of things which are right and natural in themselves, and which should be naturally and rightly used. Thus, *e.g.*, *Indignation*, which is a perfectly natural and spontaneous feeling *at the sight of injustice in others*—our Lord exhibited it more than once—may be, however, the basis of a bad temper when aroused through *self-love*, or when abused and we let the sun go down upon our wrath. *Then, it becomes sin.* When our tempers are excited, it is because our self-love is indignant and pride feels hurt; then, irritation arises and a whole vicious train of wrathful feelings follows, which, if no effort be made to chain them down, are as sinful before God as to violate the ten commandments. People sometimes say, or at least think:—"I cannot help it, my temper *will* rise; it comes of itself." This is true. But it is equally true of all strong inclinations to do wrong. The first impulse is *not* sin. So far, it is simply and solely due to the physiological constitution of our nervous system; for which we are not responsible, and we cannot help it. But, if we do not at once try to stop it, that is a sin of omission; and if

we let our temper get the mastery it immediately becomes a positive and actual sin. How can love have full sway, as it ought, where angry passions and hatred have free rein? Remember the words of St. James: "He who bridleth not his tongue, deceiveth his own heart, and that man's religion is vain;" and what did our Lord say? "Whosoever is angry with his brother"—*i.e.*, in all cases except where righteous indignation is felt—"shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire."

Such is Jesus Christ's judgment upon bad temper.

But what is the opposite to a bad temper? It is what we call *Amiability:* and by that term I do not mean to imply any necessary weakness of character; but a gentle loving spirit coupled with a firm and steadfast resistance to all kinds of yielding to morbid fancies or immoral tendencies. Do we not instinctively admire it? A loving, willing disposition, one that is always ready to do a kind act, one that thinks nothing "a trouble" when done for others. Are they not always the peace-makers in the family quarrels? Are they not always respected even by those whom their very amiability irritates? Yes, *such amiability is the domestic form of Christianity;* and happy is that home where all its members let mutual kindness have

full sway. Many a time, doubtless in the reader's own experience has a kindly touch and smile broken down a tempestuous spirit, and headstrong wilfulness has crumbled into naught before that seemingly simple but really powerful weapon—Love! This was Christ's weapon, and it is this which has conquered more souls than the sword can slay. It is the silver cord of Love which will hereafter bind together more nations in one bond of Brotherhood than our boasted hundred-ton cannon can destroy!

Once more, then, such is Love, and such is Christianity; and only he or she who exhibits it on every occasion is a true Christian.

Love, in the new and wide application given to it by our Lord, might truly be called a new creation. It is a principle of the very widest application. It begins, as we have seen, in the family circle, issuing there out of the parents' instinct for their offspring. Beyond that limited sphere, we should at once make it regulate our actions and dealings with our neighbours. Beyond them, again, it widens and takes in the entire nation and assumes the name of Patriotism. But Love refuses to be even bounded by the sea-shore, and it is the glory of our nation, beyond all others, that she will interest herself on behalf of the ignorance, degradation or sufferings of other distant nations civilized or savage, of the earth, who have no other claims upon us than that they are *men* and of the same flesh, blood and souls as our-

selves, that they as we, are alike "pensioners on the bounty of the same heavenly Father."

Whenever, therefore, we hold out the right hand of fellowship to any human beings on the face of the globe, we are Christians.

Whenever we selfishly, unjustly, or proudly refuse to do so, call ourselves what we please, we are heathens.

Such is altruistic Christianity.

There remains to be considered the Personal question, represented by the word Purity.

Purity obviously affects the twofold nature of man, his Body and Mind.

I have dwelt sufficiently on the origin of sin to enable the reader to understand readily that by purity I would signify a total absence of fleshly lusts, by preserving a strict adherence to natural laws, and by a restraint upon all tendency to undue excesses, which are nothing more than a voluntary abuse of the pleasures of sensation which accompany the healthy and well regulated action and due performance of the functions of the body.

I have already quoted St. Paul's summary of the works of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit, to which the Apostle adds the words, "Of the which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they which practise such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."* The former of those lists

* Gal. v. 19-24.

represents the many forms or results of abuses either of the functions of the body or faculties of the mind; while the latter characterizes the sound state of a *mens sana in corpore sano,* thoroughly imbued with true Christian principles of Purity and Love.

Purity of body hardly requires any further exposition; but purity of mind may demand some further illustration. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."* Purity of heart has indeed a wide signification, and one to be added to the foregoing is that of a "single" heart. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways,"† says St. James, and adds the exhortation, "Purify your hearts, ye double-minded,"‡ and it needs but little experience to know how soon would the fabric of society crumble to pieces if all men were habitual liars. No vices met with greater condemnation from our Lord than hypocrisy and lying. He designated this as the devil's own primeval sin and doomed it to the extremest penalties. It is the upright and pure in heart alone that shall see God, not with the bodily eye but with the mind and understanding enlightened by His spirit, shall we realize more and more the divine image of God in which we are created, the image "of righteousness and holiness of truth."§ What is the effect upon the man who is pure in heart? It is this, "Unto the pure all

* Matt. v. 8.
† James i. 8.
‡ James iv. 8.
§ Eph. iv. 24.

things are pure."* To become pure involves nothing short of a re-creation of the world about us.

Mr. F. W. Robertson has an excellent sermon† on this text, and I will quote his chief points: "The world says, give us a perfect set of *circumstances*, and then we shall have a set of perfect men. . . . But Christianity reverses the procedure. It proves that the fault is not in outward circumstances, but in ourselves. Like the wise physician, who, instead of busying himself with transcendental theories to improve the climate, and the outward circumstances of man, endeavours to relieve and get rid of the tendencies of disease which are from within, Christianity, leaving all outward circumstances to ameliorate themselves, fastens its attention on the spirit which has to deal with them. Christ has declared that the kingdom of heaven is from within. He said to the Pharisees, 'Ye make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within ye are full of extortion and excess.'‡

"The principle that St. Paul has here laid down is, that each man is the creator of his own world; he walks in a universe of his own creation. . . . To different men, a different world—to one all pollution —to another all purity. To the noble all things are noble, to the mean all things are contemptible. . . .

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* Titus i. 15. † *Sermons*, 3rd Series, p. 139.
‡ Matt. xxiii. 25.

To the pure, all things and all persons are pure, because their purity makes all seem pure.

"There are some who go through life complaining of this world; they say they have found nothing but treachery and deceit; the poor are ungrateful, and the rich are selfish. Yet we do not find such the best men. Experience tells us that each man most keenly and unerringly detects in others the vice with which he is most familiar himself." What is the remedy?

"Have a large charity! Large charity hopeth all things, believeth all things. Look at that sublime Apostle who saw the Churches of Ephesus and Thessalonica pure, because he saw them in his own large love, and painted them, not as they were, but as his heart filled up the picture; he viewed them in the light of his own nobleness, as representations of his own purity.

"Once more, to the pure all *things* are pure, as well as all persons," . . . and lastly he adds "all situations are pure to the pure."

"From this subject," Mr. Robertson concludes, "we learn to understand two things." The Fall and the Millenium. "When man fell, the world fell with him. All creation received a shock. Thorns, briars, and thistles sprang up. They were there before, but to the now restless and impatient hands of men they became obstacles and weeds. Death, which must ever have existed as a form of

dissolution, a passing from one state to another, became a curse; the sting of death was sin—unchanged in itself, it changed in man. A dark, heavy cloud rested on it—the shadow of his own guilty heart.

"Hence too, we understand the millenium. The Bible says that these things are not to be for ever. There are glorious things to come . . . . but nothing more is needed than to re-create the soul—the mirror on which all things are reflected. Then will be realized the prophecy of Isaiah, 'Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.'"* . . . We do not really require a new world, but *new hearts*. Let the Spirit of God purify society, and to the pure all things will be pure. The earth will put off the look of weariness and gloom which it has borne so long, and then the glorious language of the prophets shall be fulfilled, "The forests will break out with singing, and the desert will blossom as the rose."†

Such is the personal regeneration of the heart of those who are "begotten of God" and such only are Christians.

In concluding this chapter I would draw attention to the fact that the principle of Love as Christ taught it and displayed it, differs materially from a somewhat similar exposition by Buddha and

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* Isa. lxv. 17. † Isa. xxxv. 1.

all other philanthropists, in that before mankind exhibits it to all with whom he comes in contact, *he bears it first towards Jesus Christ Himself.*

"If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me," said our Lord; and it is an undoubted fact that a deep and enthusiastic love for Jesus has ever been the mainspring of all enthusiasm for mankind.

What was the secret of this enthusiastic love for Jesus Christ which not only his own personal followers have felt, but many a Christian since? It was because, as the author of *Ecce Homo* well observes, He did not use *power*, he hardly used *persuasion*, but "He laid men under an immense *obligation*." Like Buddha, "He was one whom it was impossible to benefit by conferring riches or fame or dominion upon him, and that, being so great, he had devoted himself of mere benevolence to their good." But unlike Buddha "They saw him hungry, though they believed him able to turn the stones into bread; they saw his royal pretensions spurned, though they believed that he could in a moment take into his hand all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; they saw his life in danger; they saw him at last expire in agonies, though they believed yet, had he so willed it, no danger could harm him. . . . Witnessing his sufferings, and convinced by the miracles they saw him work, that they were voluntarily endured, men's hearts were touched, and pity for

weakness blending strangely with wondering admiration of unlimited power, an agitation of gratitude, sympathy, and astonishment, such as nothing else could ever excite, sprang up in them, and when turning from his deeds to his words, they found this very self-denial which had guided his own life prescribed as the principle which should guide theirs, gratitude broke forth in joyful obedience, self-denial produced self-denial, and the Law and the Law-Giver together were enshrined in their inmost hearts for inseparable veneration."*

Such was the source of universal Humanity; for "Christ believed it possible to bind men to their kind, but on one condition—that they were first bound fast to himself. He stood forth as the representative of men, he identified himself with the cause and with the interests of all human beings, he was destined . . . to lay down his life for them. Few of us sympathise originally and directly with this devotion; few of us can perceive in human nature itself any merit sufficient to evoke it. But it is not so hard to love and venerate him who felt it. So vast a passion of love, devotion so comprehensive, elevated, deliberate and profound, has not elsewhere been in any degree approached save by some of his imitators. And as love begets love, many have felt it possible to conceive for

* *Ecce Homo*, pp. 48, 9.

Christ an attachment the closeness of which no words can describe, a veneration so possessing and absorbing the man within him, that they have said, 'I live no more, but Christ lives in me.' Now such a feeling carries with it of necessity the feeling of love for all human beings. It matters no longer what quality men may exhibit; amiable or unamiable, as the brothers of Christ, as belonging to his sacred and consecrated kind, as the objects of his love in life and death, they must be dear to all to whom he is dear. And those who would for a moment know his heart and understand his life must begin by thinking of the whole race of man, and of each member of the race, with awful reverence and hope."*

But it was not only, I repeat, those who knew the Saviour in the flesh who could thus love Him. Never since He was lifted up have there been wanting men and women who could cordially echo St. Paul's words. Hear what the great preacher Lacordaire could say:—"Pursuing love all our life, we never attain it save in an imperfect state which wounds the heart; and even if we won it in life, what would remain after death? Grant that a loving prayer follows us beyond this world, a friendly memory yet whispers our name; but ere long Heaven and Earth have moved on, forgetfulness follows, silence shrouds

* *Ecce Homo*, p. 157.

us, no breath of frail earthly love lingers still about our tomb. It is over, ended for ever, and this is the story of man's love. Yet not so. There is One Man Whose tomb has been kept by love; One Man Whose grave is not merely glorious but beloved. There is One Man Whose ashes are still warm after eighteen centuries; Who is daily born anew in the thoughts of a multitude of men, Who is visited in His cradle by shepherds and kings bringing in gold, incense, and myrrh. There is a Man Whose steps a multitude is found to tread in unweariedly, and Who, while out of sight, is traced by a crowd in every spot of His former dwelling-place—on His Mother's lap, on the lake's shore, on the mountain-top, in the valley beneath the olives, in the lonely wilderness. There is One Man dead and buried, Whose sleep and Whose rising is watched, Whose every word vibrates yet and brings forth more than love—the virtues that spring from love—There is One Man Who ages since hung from a gibbet, and daily millions of worshippers take Him down from that throne, kneel before Him, and without blushing at their humiliation, kiss His bleeding Feet with unquenchable love. There is One Man, scourged, crucified, killed, raised through His wondrous Passion from death and shame to the glory of an unfailing love, which finds peace, joy and ecstacy in Him. There is One Man Who, pursued to His death and the grave by undying hate, and Who,

requiring Apostles and Martyrs from every generation as it springs up, finds them everywhere. There is One Man and One only, Who has for ever established His Love on earth, and that Man, O my Jesus, it is Thou! Thou Who hast vouchsafed to baptize me, to consecrate me to Thy Love, and Whose very Name at this moment as I speak burns within my heart, and brings forth these tones which overwhelm me, and which I myself knew not to be in me?"*

To entertain such a loving apprehension of the Founder of our religion,—as indeed, He Himself demanded of his followers,—is a unique feature of Christianity; and it is one which, unless one feels it in some degree, one cannot be called a true Christian in the full meaning of the term.

I need not quote passages, the writings of St. Paul and others are full of exhortations to their readers to love and adore their Great Example and to prove their love by a life-long imitation of Christ.

Having now considered what constitutes a Christian individually, I shall conclude my review of the Scheme of Redemption by examining his spiritual environment, or reviewing his position as a social being, surrounded by other Christians or fellow members in the Kingdom of Heaven.

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* *Conferences*, xxxix (quoted in Lear's *Biographical Sketch of Lacordaire*), p. 198.

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT IS COMMUNION?

"Ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptised into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye are all one *man* in Christ Jesus."—*Gal.* iii. 26-28.

"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin."—1 *John* i. 6, 7.

An essential feature of Christianity is observable in the fact that it is a religion for the community as well as for individuals respectively. Unlike that enforced by the prophets of old who appealed or preached to the nation, as a whole, Christ appeals to the individual heart. But as soon as a man can exhibit faith in his Lord and Master, he is at once called upon to show his faith by his works. This he cannot do unless he have a social environment. To retire into the wilderness and adopt a hermit's life is to lapse into selfishness, the very vice from which he had been "saved" by Jesus Christ. A Christian must be *in* the world, though not *of* it.

He must stay in it wherever God and his duty may place him; otherwise he cannot have the opportunity of evincing love to all with whom he may come in contact, or of letting his light so shine before men that they may see his good works and glorify their Father which is in Heaven.* He is there as *leaven* that his influence may be felt by the unregenerate, till others become "saints,"† as well as he, and the whole community be leavened.‡ By such means is the growth and development of the Church of Christ secured: while the collection of such faithful individuals or saints constitutes the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, a kingdom which embraces all denominations of Christians, call themselves what they please. Such is Christ's Society, Community, or Kingdom.

What, then, is the nature of the Communion between the members of this kingdom?

It is not my intention to trespass on the grounds of Bishop Pearson, whose article on "The Communion of Saints" in his exposition of the Creed will be familiar to the reader, but only to try to develop the one consideration of it which concerns the view of the Kingdom to which I have limited myself in this book, namely, Christianity.

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* Matt. v. 16.

† I take the word "saints" to signify Christians, as St. Paul does. Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2; Eph. i. 1, &c.

‡ See *Ecce Homo*, p. 169 *seqq.*

The following is the paragraph in which Pearson treats of this aspect of the Communion of Saints:—

"Sixthly, therefore, The saints of God living in the Church of Christ *have communion with all the saints living in the same church.* 'If we walk in the light, we have κοινωνίαν μετ' ἀλλήλων, fellowship one with another;'* we all have benefit of the same ordinances, all partake of the same promises, we are all endued with the graces of the [same Spirit, all united with the] same mutual love and affection, 'keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;'† all engrafted into the same stock, and so receiving life from the same root; ‡ all 'holding the same head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.'§ For, in the philosophy of the Apostle, the nerves are not only the instruments of motion and sensation, but of nutrition also; so that every member receiveth nourishment by their intervention from the head; and being [seeing] the head of the body in Christ, and all the saints are members of that body, they all partake of the same nourishment, and so have all communion among themselves."

The word Communion means "bound together by obligation;"‖ and besides the characteristics of

* 1 John i. 7. † Eph. iv. 3.
‡ Rom. xi. 17, 18. § Col. ii. 19.
‖ DER.—*Cum*, "together" and *munis*, "ready to be of

our religion mentioned by Bishop Pearson which are common to all Christians, we find that what might be thought to be natural and necessary distinctions between individuals are apparently abolished, as we learn from the passage of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, quoted as a heading to this chapter. Hence the Communion of Saints may be regarded not only from a positive, but from a negative point of view as well. On the one hand are there the positive features which we recognize under the terms Faith, Hope, Love, Purity, a common Father, one Lord, one Baptism and so forth; while, on the other, there is an abolishing of certain distinctions which from a natural and social point of view we are apt to look upon as not only obvious but necessary and important.

We will consider this latter aspect, as it is passed over by Pearson altogether.

If St. Paul's statement quoted above be true, we at once perceive that there must be a most marked and singular difference between the relationships existing amongst the members of Christ's Kingdom and those of any ordinary community existing in the world.

The contrast between the Church and the world is one which is certainly very often made by St.

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service," or "obliging," *e.g.*, *munifici munesque viri*, Lucil. in Non. 23, 15.

Paul, especially as to the behaviour of the members of the former as contrasted with the usual state of life and morals of the heathen.

Now, a point which must strike the attentive reader of the New Testament is that the teaching of Christ and His apostles is not so much a mere *improvement* upon the older notions of morality, or, as it were, a better kind of manners; but that it is in many ways a total *inversion* and overthrowal of the Gentile ideas of what was right and wrong.

Thus, for example, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" was not only a maxim recognized by all nations as perfectly legitimate; but such retaliation was thought to be right and noble. Christ, however, enjoins a behaviour of an exactly opposite kind upon His disciples. Again, anger and hatred were things common enough and often thought to be not only justifiable but highly commendable. But bad temper in Christ's eyes is criminal, for He declares that "every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment."* Revenge was not only sweet, but the bounden duty of the injured; while to return good for evil is our Lord's maxim. Brute force was the noblest power with the heathens; moral courage is all in all to the Christian. Self-interest was the one aim of life to the men of old; self-sacrifice is

* Matt. v. 22.

the motto of everyone who would follow *this* Master's footsteps. Everyone for himself was thought to be the correct thing then. "In honour preferring one another"* is our duty now.

Not only, however, do the moral precepts of Christianity breathe a spirit which in many ways is an entire reversal of the old Gentile and Jewish notions; but the relationships of those who become Christians are entirely different from those which the world has ever established between its various classes of men and women.

On the one hand God, as we learn from St. Peter, is no respecter of persons; on the other, civilization and barbarism alike make many arbitrary distinctions and castes, in addition to the natural grades which must always exist between the different classes of society.

In the world there ever has been and ever will be, so to say, *Jew* and *Gentile;* for these two terms are taken to represent all nations. Again there is *bond* and *free, i.e.,* these terms may stand for grades of society. And lastly there must remain male and female.

In thus contrasting Christianity with the world, we must not fall into the fundamental error of the communist of supposing that grades of society should

* Rom. xii. 10.

be abolished. The formation of grades in a nation is as inevitable as the formation of nations themselves. There must be different men to do different work, and there always will be the clever and energetic ones who lead the way, and the idle and dull who gravitate to the bottom of the series. It is not the existence of separate grades of society to which Christianity is opposed; but it is the wrongful spirit of contempt, of superciliousness, of hard-heartedness, of callousness, and the still worse effects of these feelings, shown in tyranny and cruelty, which have almost always in former days and even now too often maintained themselves between nation and nation, between class and class, between man and woman. It is a contemptuous spirit, an overbearing spirit, which tends to draw a hard and sharp line between man and his fellow-men, which so often separates the white from the black races; and the higher from the lower classes in our own community, and which is so utterly abhorrent to the true principles of Christianity.

It has been said that Christ advocated communism; and this idea may have some countenance from the practice of His immediate followers, who had all things in common; but that that state of things could not last was soon obvious, nor was it part of Christianity at all.

When, however, Christ said, "Render unto Cæsar

the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's,"* it is evident that He did recognize earthly dynasties and their right to taxes, imports and other dues, &c.; but that underlying or rather permeating them in every direction should be the spirit of the kingdom of Heaven, which is thus an *imperium in imperio.*

The relationship between the Church and the State must be regarded from two points of view. The popular one seems to be confined to the pecuniary aid which the State may furnish to keep up the particular system carried out by the representatives of Christ in the land: that a national Church is merely linked to the State by its endowments. Such, however, is not Christ's view, which is this, that the whole character of every system of Legislation should be based on His eternal principles of justice, equality and truth.

But the point we are more specially concerned with now, is the union between the kingdom of Heaven and the nation in its social point of view; and that union can only be made by means of the Silver Cord of Love, which should bind all grades and ranks together; while the necessary existence of those grades and ranks is at the same time recognized to the full.

Christianity, I repeat, fully recognizes nations.

* Mark xii. 17.

She recognizes grades of society. She recognizes men and women; but would bind them all together in the bonds of Love, which knows no distinction of age, sex, grade or nationality; for such is the Communion of Saints.

In the words of St. Paul, then, the contrasts are referred to, as national, in being represented by Jew and Gentile; as social, by the terms bond and free; as sexual, by the words male and female.

To understand the real import of these words of St. Paul's, we must try to picture to ourselves what was the usual feeling at the time he wrote them.

I have already called the reader's attention to the condition of nations at that period; how at the time of our Lord's coming, the accepted belief and practice of both Jews and Gentiles had been in accordance with the maxim:—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour but hate thine enemy."

"The earliest condition of mankind of which we have any knowledge was one of perpetual war. Homer describes a state of society in which a man was safe in the possession of his lands and flocks only so long as there was strength enough in his right arm to defend them. As soon as the primitive man began to grow old and to lose his vigour, there was danger that his neighbours would drive off his cattle and encroach upon his estate. Ulysses in the early part of his wanderings, before he has lost his fleet and army, lands on the Thracian coast, and

finds a city. He instantly sacks it and kills all the inhabitants. This is not because there has been a quarrel, but because there has been no treaty; the normal condition of men at that time being mutual enmity. To this mutual enmity, however, there is an exception established by an imperative law of nature. Persons of the same family live in perpetual alliance. . . . The primitive man had no obligations, no duties, to any except his parents, his brothers and his parents' brothers and their families."*

Now what does the Founder of Christianity say? "I say unto you Love your enemies." In one sense this means every foreigner.† God is no respecter of nations or of persons, but is the God of the Gentiles as He is of the Jew. Under the laws of the New Covenant, Love therefore must replace Hate: and when all nations shall have learnt that lesson, the prophecy shall be fulfilled when "men shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning hooks and shall not learn war any more."‡

All nations, therefore, are as one in the sight of God and His Christ.

Secondly, there is neither bond nor free. In

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* *Ecce Homo*, p. 120.

† This is seen in the words ἔχθος, *hate*, and ὁ ἔχθρος *one's enemy*, derived from ἐκτός, *without*; just as hostis, *enemy*, bore originally the signification of *stranger*.

‡ Micah iv. 3.

those days there were but two classes of society, the bond or slaves and the free who bought or sold them, and whose lives were at the mercy of their owners' caprice.

Society now divides itself into what we nominally call the three classes—the upper, middle and lower —but these again subdivide themselves into grades.

I repeat there is nothing objectionable, much less wrong, in this. Their existence is the issue of the general process of Evolution which applies to the formation of strata in society as of classes in the animal and vegetable kingdoms.

How, then, it may be asked, can St. Paul say that in Christianity there is neither bond nor free; neither, we might add, by implication, the upper, middle or lower classes of English Society? He means, of course, that in the sight of Jesus, in the sight of God, the soul of the beggar in the street is as precious as that of the highest in the realm. That money, position in society, earthly dignities, worldly honours, count for nothing as compared with spiritual goodness. That nobility of birth is, in the Kingdom of Heaven, as dross compared with the true nobility of the soul.

It matters not, therefore, to what grade one may belong. It was not, for example, the fact or existence of slavery which St. Paul is condemning,—though in these days we see a wrong in the institution itself,—but the position of the slave as brought

about by the inhuman, *i.e.* unchristian behaviour of the master, who not only might if he chose, but who only too often did tyrannize over his slaves, who treated them without any compunction as worse than beasts of burden. Herein lay the evil, the unchristian spirit of which still lingers in the heart of all white "Christians" who look upon their black brethren in contempt and dub them alike as "niggers" to be scorned.

Slavery with its horrors is abolished from amongst us; and the whole nature of our civilization has altered since St. Paul wrote these words; so that the conditions which then obtained between master and slave, can never return. Is then St. Paul's assertion that we are all one in Christ Jesus, fully realized? Do we all, from the highest to the lowest, Christians as we call ourselves, fully recognize and act upon this unity? Do we understand what is meant by Community of Saints as applicable to grades of society? For example, does every nobleman regard his workman as a brother in the Lord? Does the great manufacturer always look upon his hired workmen and work-women as beings to be cared for, not only because they are of the same flesh and blood as himself, but because they are as much objects of God's solicitude as himself? Or, does he hire them at so much a head, for so much work; get just as much labour out of them as he can, just as he tries to get the same out of his

steam-engine, and then consider all obligation is ended?

Let us not forget that wealth arises out of nature's resources. Each class, from royalty to the peasant, depends in succession one upon the other, till the lowest in the series wrenches by the sweat of his brow the treasures from Nature herself, and *the better able he is to do this, the greater the wealth for the community at large;* coal, iron, corn or what not —who are they who get them for us that we may grow wealthy by their toil? In every case, if the bottom rungs of a ladder be broken, who can ever mount to the top? It is the most short-sighted policy to treat those in an unchristian way who are least able to help themselves; but if they be encouraged, but not spoiled; aided, but not hampered; helped, but only to enable them to help themselves, then, assuredly, will all above them, each in turn and degree, reap blessings promised from above; because Christ's words will be fulfilled, "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure pressed down and shaken together and running over shall men give into your bosom. For with the *same measure* that *ye* mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."*

This, however, is not a treatise on political economy; hence it is out of place to pursue the

* Luke vi. 38.

subject in that direction. All I wish the reader to see is that, from a Christian point of view, the Communion of Saints means, in its bearings on the social question, that it is the business of Christianity to be concerned, not with the contract itself, but with the spirit in which every contract is carried out. We must "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," but in so doing we must not neglect "to render also to God the things that are God's." That is to say, whatever contract, agreement or arrangement we may make with our fellow-men and women, God and His Christ imperatively demand that we shall consider the individual and his interests as well as our own.

There yet remains the third contrast, viz., between male and female. Much might be written upon this subject. The position of woman in any society may almost be taken as a test of the degree to which civilization and the principles of Christianity pervade that nation. In all uncivilized peoples women and children are chattels or slaves. The wife is always bought, and holds necessarily a degraded position.

In the days of St. Paul, the Greek and the Roman wife were more respected than in earlier and more barbaric states of society; but she was still very far from being what the Christian wife now is. The contrast, therefore, which St. Paul makes would be more appreciated then, than it can be with us:

but the spirit of Christianity should still guide us in all our relationships, whether in our national intercourse, our social nexus, or our domestic ties.

In concluding these remarks on the spirit of the Communion of Saints, I will quote three sentences of our Lord which entirely agree with these words of St. Paul.

The Apostle says, In Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, ye are all one. Christ says "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them must I bring that there may be one fold and one Shepherd.*

St. Paul says again, there is neither bond nor free. Jesus said to His disciples, "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."†

Lastly, St. Paul says, there is neither male nor female. Our Lord asks, "Who is my mother? He that doeth the will of my Father, who is in Heaven, the same is my mother, my sister, and my brother."‡

There remains to be considered the symbolical representation of the Communion of Saints which is celebrated in the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper.

St. Paul says to the Corinthians "Flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it

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* John x. 16. † Luke xxii. 26. ‡ Matt. xii. 48.

not a communion of (or *participation* in) the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? Seeing that *we, who are many, are* one bread, *one body;* for we all partake of the one bread."*

What is this communion but a spiritual union amongst the members of the body of Christ; that is, his Church on Earth?

Is the advice "Flee from idolatry" superfluous at this age? It is to be feared not, for many still cling to a carnal interpretation of Christ's words which he uttered when instituting the "Lord's Supper," notwithstanding the invaluable commentary or interpretation which He Himself has given us in the words, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before. It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."†

These words, I repeat, form the best possible commentary upon those others of Christ's which he pronounced when instituting the Lord's Supper. "Take, eat, this is my body."—But let us first consider the circumstances under which the words I have quoted were said.

The chapter commences with an account of the miracle of feeding five thousand persons with five

* 1 Cor. x. 14-17. † John vi. 62, 63.

loaves and two fishes. A miracle with a most significant meaning in it, far more intelligible and forcible to us, *now*, than to those who partook of that extraordinary bounty. Indeed its spiritual import appears to have been utterly lost to them; for Jesus perceiving how the crowds followed Him, rebuked their avariciousness as well as dullness of heart by telling them:—"Verily, verily I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracle, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled."

From this an easy transit is made to His customary method of teaching by parables:—"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give you." Then, as a test of His authority to give them such meat as He spoke of, there came from them the usual demand for a sign from heaven, shrewdly (as they doubtless thought) alluding to the manna which was considered an indubitable witness to the divine authority of Moses.

Again does Christ seize upon their own words and turn them, as we should say, most adroitly to point His own teaching; for the manna supplied Him with even a better illustration than the earthly loaves. He at once compares *Himself* with that manna. "For" (He replied) "the bread of life is He which came down from Heaven and giveth life unto the world—I am the bread of life." He that

cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink."* Words very similar to the above, he had already spoken to the woman of Samaria; "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." I have referred to these two occasions, for we have the distinct assertion of the Evangelist that this life-giving power, whether it be represented by the living bread or the living water, is no other than the Holy Spirit, the divine incomprehensible spirit of God the Father and of God the Son; that spirit in whom we live, move, and have our being, and who could not be sent from Heaven until Christ had ascended in the body:—as He said "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I go I will send him unto you."

Now, we have the recorded testimony of His apostles who were eyewitnesses of that wonderful event, that He ascended into Heaven in the same flesh and blood "as they saw Him have" when a cloud received Him out of their sight. "And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white

* John vii. 38.

apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

That prophecy has not yet been fulfilled; and it is for the Christian Church to wait patiently and watchfully until the hour shall come for His return: but this does not preclude His presence with us in the Spirit. But His Spirit cannot be confined to time and place. If we climb up into Heaven He is there. If we descend to the shades below He is there also. We cannot escape from His presence now any more than Jonah of old. On the other hand, it is utterly inconceivable, not to say contradictory, that the Spirit of Christ should be more in one place than another. That which is of its nature "incomprehensible"—a word which means "not to be measured" or "what is boundless"—such a spirit cannot be localized to any spot. It cannot be concentrated as it were within the walls of a sanctuary, much less within any smaller compass.

Now let us return to the Gospel. Christ tells his disciples not to labour for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life: and He adds that that meat is Himself, and the works or labour that they must do is "to believe on Him whom God hath sent." And when they ask forth at everlasting bread He replies:—"He that

cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." And again in the 40th verse He repeats it by saying, "Everyone that beholdeth the Son and believeth on him shall have eternal life."

Surely, we should have thought those words sufficiently plain: and with the experience of His manner of teaching by parables they would have seen that all He asked them to do, was one and the same thing with what He had asked them all along—to follow Him, to give Him their faithful allegiance, to sacrifice self and the world for duty, and to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. But no! To be told simply to *come* to Him and *believe* on Him and they should have eternal life was not enough. He changes his expression therefore, for they do not seem to know what He means by *coming* to Him, and says to them as they stand around Him, "Everyone that *beholdeth* the Son"—surely they could not mistake that word—"and believeth, shall have eternal life."

But worse and worse! They now begin to murmur at Him. Not till an angry and hostile attitude was assumed by His hearers did He wrap up His meaning in those strong and—to them—hard sayings which brought their unbelief to be self-condemnatory and to recoil upon their own heads, that the prophecy might be fulfilled:—"Make the heart of this people fat and make their

ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed."*

And this brings us to consider that saying which appeared so hard to the disciples that they asked "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

He no longer favours them with any further explanations. He has already given his meaning in plain and simple terms; but now as a judgment upon them makes it yet ten times harder to their comprehension:—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

Well knowing how this last sentence would offend them, and seeing how many it would cause to drop off from Him, He says to them as a last and saving hope:—"Doth this offend you? What then, if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life."

Now the first conclusion that we arrive at, in ascertaining the meaning of Christ's words, is that "to come to Him" is never to hunger, and that whosoever will come to Him, He will never refuse or cast him out. Again He says:—"He that believeth on me shall never thirst, and hath everlasting life."

* Isa. vi. 10.

But Christ identifies this with the eating of the living bread—His flesh—and the drinking of living water, or His blood.

It is impossible to separate this instructive conversation with the Jews from any consideration of that Memorial of His death which we celebrate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

That* Christ did not attach any very great importance to rites and ceremonies may be argued on the one hand from his establishing but two only; and on the other that the religion He came to introduce was a spiritual religion in direct contrast to the Levitical, which was essentially ritual and ceremonial.

The only two symbolical ceremonies which we recognize as sacraments are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The one expresses the distinctness of the Church from the world; the other the unity of the Church within itself, and between it and its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In instituting the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper Christ did not depart from His usual practice of seizing upon what was in common use, or what was more or less generally understood to have some significance in itself, and then to impart to it some higher truth of a deeper spiritual kind.

* I am indebted to the chapter (xv.) on "the Lord's Supper" in *Ecce Homo*, p. 162, for some of the following ideas.

Just as Baptism had already existed as a rite of proselytism amongst the Jews, so the *idea* which had gathered round the meeting of friends at a table had already acquired something of a sacred character; hence we read of the *sacræ mensæ*, or the sacred rites of the table, in the writings of the Romans. So that in establishing this holy feast Christ, as it were, stood upon ground which was in some degree already prepared for Him, and the two objects which He had in view in appointing a common feast were, first to symbolize the Communion of Saints,—that is the common bond of love between all its members which forms the unity within the Church itself; and in the second place, the "nature and manner of that union," namely, as a union between the Church and its living Head, Himself.

The first union, that between the several members of the Church is most obvious. All Christians are admitted on equal terms; the same words are addressed to the monarch and to the peasant, and they may kneel side by side, equal in the sight of God, who is no respecter of persons.

The Author of *Ecce Homo* well remarks that "the extreme simplicity of the ceremony [as Christ founded it] makes its symbolical character more impressive, and averts, as far as that is possible, the danger which all venerated symbols incur of being valued for their own sake, and confounded

with the thing signified. "The meal consisted of bread and wine, the simplest, and in those countries the most universal elements of food; and when men of different nations or degrees sat or knelt together and received as from the hand of God, this simple repast, they were reminded in the most forcible manner of their common wants, and their common character of pensioners on the bounty of the Universal Father." *

This then is *One* object of that Sacrament, to symbolize the communion of Saints amongst themselves; but we see there is another—their communion with Jesus Christ their Lord and Master. To convey this, "He bade His followers consider the bread they ate as His body, and the wine they drank as His blood: and that by so doing He told them they should have 'life.'" "What Christ meant by *life* is not now difficult to discover. *It is that healthy condition of mind which issues almost of necessity in right action.*" † And so the two objects of this Sacrament were to be permanently linked together.

Men will not have communion with each other unless they have communion with Christ. In other words, men can only learn to love each other with a genuine Christian love, by "eating His flesh and by drinking His blood."

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* *Ecce Homo*, p. 164. † *l.c.*, p. 164.

I cannot help thinking that in the eyes of many communicants, the Sacrament does not carry this meaning with it so plainly as it ought. Is there not a little too much *isolation*, so to say, in our feelings when partaking of the bread and wine? It is true that we all meet at the one common table, but who thinks of all the rest as well as of himself or herself? Are not our individual thoughts mostly concerned in asking for forgiveness for our own sins, with, it may be, earnest prayer for strength that this day's communion may help us to live a better life, may enable us to forego those sins which so easily beset us? And this is well, for we are seeking a more spiritual union with Christ by coming. But for all that we must not lose sight of the primary meaning of the feast, That it is a *communion*, or a common feast. And it seems to me that this feeling of isolation, as I call it, is countenanced by the very method of administering the sacrament as appointed by our liturgy, in the practice of partaking the elements singly and not collectively in a body, while in addition, the words pronounced to each individual recipient remind him of his own special wants and duties in return for what Christ has done for him personally. If we pass from our own Protestant Church to the Roman Catholic, we find graver errors; for Roman Catholicism interprets the words "This is my body" according to the literal sense, and believes in the actual presence

of the substance of the body of Christ after the consecration of the elements. On this supposition of the actual presence of our Lord at the sacrament, it is quite in harmony to render the service the grandest and most imposing. This is but the issue of a natural impulse. Look at the Jewish worship; where the visible presence of God in the form of the Shekinah shone over the mercy seat, the ceremonial service could not be too gorgeous. The same idea has ever held sway in heathendom. Imagining the idols to be Gods, and so immediately present at the worship, the material glorification of the idol and the abject abasement of the devotee appear to have been the absorbing ideas of the worshipper. And I think the rule might be stated broadly, that the more immediately present, in an objective form, is the Deity supposed to be, the more ceremonial will the service become, and the greater will be the tendency in the mind of the worshipper to prostrate and debase the human body.

Now our Church interprets those words differently; indeed, as I have endeavoured to explain in the parallel passage from the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel. The Church of England does not define or describe any material or even objective presence whatever. She does not admit Transubstantiation, nor even Consubstantiation, as a modified form of that doctrine was called.

It may seem almost unnecessary to give reasons for disbelieving what we are not taught to believe; nay, we are distinctly told is erroneous. But there seem to be many of our body who waver in their allegiance to the Protestant faith. And when we see first one and then another pass over into the Church of Rome; nay more, when we see her teaching unblushingly asserted within our own Church's walls; surely it is not out of place to give some reason for regarding the view held of this sacrament by that Church to be wrong.

Briefly stated, then, the Roman Catholic doctrine is this. Taking the words in their literal sense it is believed that the "substance" in the bread and wine is actually and miraculously replaced, in consequence of the prayer of consecration, by the "substance" of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. In the first place, our senses refuse to recognize any change whatever, irrespective of the extreme improbability of such a miracle being continually wrought: and we are bound to follow the plain dictates of reason which God has given us, where its evidence is incontrovertible.

In the second place, the whole doctrine of a Real Presence, as it has been called, of which Transubstantiation is one view adopted by the Church of Rome, depends on the supposed existence of what was called the *substance* of the bread and wine. This word, thus used, does not bear the common

meaning attached to it in ordinary language; but was chosen to represent a *something*, which the schoolmen of the Middle Ages supposed to underlie all kinds of matter. So that they said the *substance* was to a *thing* what *personality* was to a man. The so-called substance was the IT just as the *person* is the HE. Then the shape, size, colour and other peculiarities of any particular kind of matter were called its *accidents*. And though these latter might change, the substance, the IT, would remain the same.

It is obvious, therefore, that the truth or fallacy of the notion of any so-called Real Presence, as in Transubstantiation or Consubstantiation, must depend upon the very existence of this supposed "substance." Is there, then, any such thing at all? Modern science most unhesitatingly denies it. Chemistry did not exist in the days of the schoolmen. They had no notion that bread and wine could be analyzed and the relative amounts of the atoms of the elements entering into their composition ascertained, or the molecules of their compound ingredients and all their properties known. The existence of any spiritual substance was a purely gratuitous assumption, which cannot rest on a single fact whatever.

On the other hand what the schoolmen called "accidents" are our own subjective impressions; and in point of fact, these are variable, as the nervous systems of individuals vary. Though the

wine may be red to most eyes it will be green to the colour-blind. It may taste agreeable to one and disagreeable to another. The bread may be soft to our touch; but it probably resembles firm vesicular lava to the nerves of a fly crawling over it.

Hence it is that chemistry has utterly exploded the idea of the existence of the so-called "Substance,"* because it entirely destroys the crude notions of the nature of matter out of which it arose. Consequently any ideas which embrace the notion of Christ's Spirit or "Substance" entering the bread and wine are purely *à priori* or subjective, and are without the slightest objective basis of evidence whatever. The fact is that men will never cease to invent rationalistic and metaphysical notions to try and explain all spiritual matters. As in the case of the Atonement, as we have seen, starting with the erroneous idea of an expiatory sacrifice, they tried to explain how it was effectual; so, taking our Lord's words in a carnal and literal sense instead of metaphorically, they have constructed materialistic theories, such as Transubstantiation and all the varying degrees of a real

* The word "substance" is equivalent to "essence," from the word *esse* "to be" or "to exist," and means not the matter of which anything is composed, but a sort of spiritual entity underlying it.

presence to account for the supposed method, and to explain the "how."

Surely it is time that the investigations of modern science and the reflections of modern thought should be listened to by ecclesiastics; for since Nature and Grace both equally claim their source from God the Father; the lessons the one has to teach ought not to be thrown away upon those whose special province it may be to advocate the other.

I would further add that all mechanical theories of grace, such as Expiatory Sacrifices, Extreme Unction, Real Presence, Apostolical Succession, &c., are simply and wholly rationalistic in the highest degree; for they all rest on purely *à priori* assumptions alone, and are thereby worthless: because there is no objective evidence to support them. Ecclesiastics may well take a lesson from Positivism and St. Paul, and learn the necessity of "Proving all things and only holding fast to that which is true."*

But apart from the false idea underlying Transubstantiation, perhaps as strong an objection to it lies in the total subversion of principles, so to say, which is involved in it. For such an idea with respect to this sacrament is essentially materialistic. The actual body of our Lord is believed in some way to be present in the sacrament. And *all views*,

* 1 Thes. v. 21.

however modified from that extreme form, but still embracing some idea of a tangible, visible, or materialistic presence, savour of carnal or Jewish principles and *not* of the Christian, which are essentially spiritual. See how the great type of our Lord's sacrifice bears this out. The Passover was slain and the lamb *had to be eaten;* and the eating of it was an essential part of that Jewish sacrifice. But the Lamb was emblematic of Christ our passover who was slain for us; and the eating the lamb was typical of spiritually eating the body of Christ.

But flesh profiteth nothing. Had it been otherwise, the Apostle argues in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ would not have died. Thus it is clear that in whatever degree we suffer our minds to embrace a material presence associated with a carnal eating and drinking of the victim, in that same degree do we *lower,* not heighten, the dignity of this holy sacrament. And to the same degree as men fancy they see Christ present before them, so will there be the same degree of tendency to adorn that sacrament with external and a more or less gorgeous and objective ritual.

On the other hand our reformed branch of the Catholic Church, regarding the spiritual manifestation of Christ as a far higher one than any carnal or materialistic, sees in Christ's Word a promise of His spiritual presence alone, to strengthen, guide and help all faithful and humble followers and all who

come to Him for forgiveness, believing His words to be *spirit* and to be *Life*.

Our Church, too, does not forget the *simplicity* which marked the first sacrament, and argues that if Christ saw no need of further adornment she also has no grounds for any such profuse additions as are added in the Roman Church. Nay, I would repeat that the spirit in which they are made, *lowers* the dignity of the sacrament, though added with exactly the opposite purpose; for that Church does not see that they are the outward witnesses to a carnal interpretation, and thereby throws back the righteousness which is by faith alone into the unsaving righteousness of the ceremonial law.

No, we do not want Christ's body in any but a spiritual sense. If it had been needful, He would not have withdrawn it from us: nor, indeed, have told us that it was *expedient* for Him to go! But what He would have us do, is "to offer Him our personal devotion, to feed habitually upon the *character* of Christ so that the essential nature of the Master may seem to pass into and become the essential nature of the servant."

It is a loyalty which carries to the point of self-annihilation expressed by the words: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" or, as our Lord said, "Take eat, this is my body."*

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* *Cf. Ecce Homo*, p. 165-6.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?*

"And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom."—*St. Matt.* iv. 26.

We have one more question to ask, and that is whence do we derive all the facts put forward in the preceding chapters? The answer is they are to be found in the Gospels of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. What are they?

Gospel, from the Saxon "Gode spell," is the modern rendering for the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον or "good message." What was this good news? It is often qualified as the Gospel of Salvation, of Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins.

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* This chapter is to a large extent based upon the latest of Prebendary Row's valuable works entitled *Revelation and Modern Theology contrasted*, with the whole of which I cordially agree; and which I would strongly recommend my readers to study, especially in conjunction with his *Bampton Lectures* for 1877.

If, again, we turn to St. Luke, we find it heralded in with the refrain

> "Glory to God in the highest,
> And on earth peace among
> Men in whom he is well pleased."*

Hence it has been called the Gospel of Peace.

This good news, therefore, appears to have concerned men, first as sinners in the sight of God: secondly in their relationship as fellow creatures on earth.

But the Gospel was announced as something else, or rather as the same thing in another form; for we find St. John the Baptist proclaiming the Advent of a Kingdom:—"The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand;" and in the verse quoted as the heading to this chapter, we find Jesus preaching the Gospel of that Kingdom; while at the close of our Lord's life upon earth we hear him declaring to Pilate that He is the King over that kingdom.

The idea of a kingdom of God was unmistakably derived from the prophetical books of the Old Testament and especially that of Daniel.† The figure of a "stone cut without hands, which smote the image and became a great mountain and filled the whole earth," clearly indicates the Divine origin of that kingdom; and is closely paralleled by our

* Luke ii. 14.

† See particularly Dan. ii. 34, 35 and 44; as well as Dan. viii. 9-11, 13, 14, 27.

Lord's descriptions in his parables of the gradual development of the Kingdom of Heaven till it shall embrace every nation upon the earth.

The Jews were perfectly familiar with the prophecies of Daniel, and eagerly expected the coming of the Messiah at the period of His manifestation; hence their readiness to come to the Baptist, though they may have misconceived and did completely misunderstand the nature of the kingdom of Heaven which was at hand.

The Gospel according to the Scriptures is, then, the record of the founding of the kingdom of Heaven upon earth. The Evangelists have recorded the character and work of the King, its Founder, the nature and objects of this kingdom, and the necessary conduct and character of the lives of all who would become members of the Kingdom and subjects of the King.

But is this what is generally understood by the Gospel? By many, perhaps by most, it is supposed to mean a collection of abstract metaphysical doctrines; such, for example, as the ordinarily received doctrine of the Atonement, that of the Trinity as elaborated in the Athanasian creed; or again, it has been thought to be part of the Gospel that none who were not baptized could ever go to heaven; not to add the acceptance of the dogmas of election, predestination, eternal damnation, &c.; while in the Romish Church are superadded Tran-

substantiation, the immaculate conception of the Virgin, the infallibility of the Pope and many other things necessary to be believed by her votaries, as doubtless elements of the "good news."

When, however, we go straight back to the fountain-head, namely, the New Testament, we do not find either Jesus or His Apostles instructing their disciples in anything of the kind. The good news of His Gospel was something which the poor and ignorant could at once accept and understand, as being far simpler than abstract dogmas which in all cases appeal solely to the intellect, some of which, too, no one can possibly comprehend.

Our Lord said:—"I thank Thee, O Heavenly Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes."* If this be true, how is it possible that the highly metaphysical and scholastic refinements about the Real Presence, the difference between ὁμοούσιος and ὁμοιούσιος, &c., could have formed part of the Gospel of the poor, who were blessed in having it preached unto them?†

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a very different thing from the Gospel of ecclesiasticism.

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* Luke x. 21. † Matt. xi. 5.

Let us now consider, first, the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven; secondly, the person and character of the King; and, thirdly, who are the subjects of the King.

What, then, was the Kingdom of Heaven which St. John said was at hand? It is an indisputable fact that the Jews were anxiously expecting the Messiah and a new *regime* to be about to be established; but the character of the King as portrayed by the prophets was one after David's stamp; his throne was to be at Jerusalem,* and the King would there hold his court and rule the Jews. All the glowing accounts of his kingdom as given by the prophets are coloured by the Jewish environment, with the extravagant imagery so characteristic of eastern descriptions. The kingdom was to be theocratic, but with a warrior king as God's vice-gerent on earth, who enters his possessions, like David, through blood and with the sword.† The descriptions of it are sufficiently barbarous and marred by moral imperfections to show that the prophets as a rule had no higher conception than that of the government of David, but on a grander and more expanded scale. Such is the idea presented by Isaiah,‡ who adds that idolatry would be abolished, that wars should cease and that the Gentiles should become members of the kingdom. Yet still is Jerusalem the capital

* Isa. lxvi. 19-24. † Isa. xxxiv. 1-6. ‡ Isa. ii.

and seat of worship while men shall exhort one another to go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob.*

Hence arose the contracted views which the Jews held of the nature and extent of the Messiah's kingdom, at the period of His advent.

But when Christ came, what did He do? Accepting all the prophecies of the Messiah, so far as they were personal, He appropriated them to Himself; but on the other hand, so far as the descriptions of the kingdom of the Messiah were local and temporal, and of Jewish surroundings, He rejected them, adopting solely what was spiritual and eternal.

Instead of going up to worship at Jerusalem only, all men of all nations must henceforth worship One and the same God in spirit and in truth.† Instead of the sword, Love was to be the new and more powerful weapon for the propagation of the Gospel: "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is my kingdom not from hence."‡ Instead of "the indignation of the Lord being upon all nations and his fury against all their

* Isa. ii. 3. Some of the prophecies, as part of Jeremiah, &c., seem to rise above this temporal and limited view, and picture the kingdom of the Messiah as more catholic; but it is the exception and not the rule of their descriptions.

† John iv. 24. ‡ John xviii. 36.

armies,"* the King hath said:—"Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you."† Instead of offering the alternative of death or Christianity, as Mahomet offered Islam, "I will put my laws in their inward parts, and I will write them in their hearts . . . and they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them."‡

In a few words, while identifying Himself with the Messiah of the prophets, Christ changes time into eternity; the chosen race is expanded into all mankind, past, present, and future; while Jerusalem on earth, which was in bondage with her children, is rejected for the New Jerusalem which is from above and which is the mother of us all.

Such in brief was the view Christ took of the Messianic prophecies, when He applied them to Himself and to the kingdom of Heaven.

What was He in Himself?

When Pilate asked Jesus:—"Art thou a King then?" He replied:—"Thou sayest that I am a King; to this end have I been born; and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one who is of the truth heareth my voice." Pilate saith unto Him:—"What is truth?"§

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* Isa. xxxiv. 2. † Matt. v. 44.

‡ Jer. xxxi. 31, 33. The reader should compare this highly spiritual prophecy with the extremely local and temporal imagery immediately following it in vv. 38-40. See Row, *l.c.*, p. 88. § John xviii. 37-38.

The points here definitely affirmed have been well summarized by Prebendary Row as follows:—*

"1. That our Lord claimed to be a King, and as such, to possess a kingdom.

"2. That the kingdom to which He laid claim differed in its fundamental idea from all others, in being a spiritual and moral kingdom.

"3. That as such it disclaimed all right to the exercise of coercive power.

"4. That as the possession of this power is the essential characteristic of all earthly kingdoms and states, so the only support of His kingdom was conviction of truth; and consequently that the only means by which subjects to it could be gained, or its boundaries extended, was persuasion.

"5. That the great end and purpose of His mission was to bear witness to the truth; and therefore He claimed to rule over men by the sole power of conviction and by their voluntary choice.

"6. That every one who was of the truth would be His willing subject."

Now, we too may ask with Pilate "What is truth?" The answer is, God is Truth; and we may therefore define Christ as being the objective revelation of the moral side of the Deity; or as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews expresses it, "the effulgence of his glory and the very image of

* Row, *l.c.*, p. 227.

his substance." Such also is the idea underlying the words of St. John:—"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father) full of grace and truth. . . The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."*

On another occasion our Lord identified Himself with Jehovah, when He said, "before Abraham was I AM," claiming for Himself the very same title as that which Jehovah had instructed Moses to use when he was commissioned to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Now this title, which represents absolute Existence, is synonymous with Truth, and when Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," these three phrases might be summarized by the words "I am;" for if we ask with Pilate, what is truth? the answer is that it stands for all that *is*." Consider its opposite, falsehood. Such is simply a denial of facts or what "are." Facts are Truth. The invariable laws of nature, a phrase which merely means an "observed order of facts," are Truth. The laws of grace in the moral world are likewise Truth. Hence we speak of the laws of justice, mercy, &c. All such are Truth. Hence we speak of God who changes not as a God of Truth.

* John i. 14-18.

"The Way, the Truth and the Life" not only stands for the Ideal Life, but was strictly characteristic of the actual life of Jesus Christ on earth and was thus a visible manifestation of the character of God the Father; that is of the eternally existing One, the everlasting I AM.

No wonder is it, then, that Christ regarded with such abhorrence "all persons who call themselves one thing and are another. He describes them by a word which originally meant an 'actor.' . . . . And in the Sermon on the Mount, whenever Christ denounces any vice, it is with the words 'Be not you like the actors.' In common with all great reformers Christ felt that honesty in word and deed was the fundamental virtue; dishonesty, including affectation, self-consciousness, love of stage effect, the one incurable vice. Our thoughts, words and deeds are to be of a piece. . . . A pious and devout life will undoubtedly win for a man the reverence of the multitude, and yet Christ tells us when we pray we are to think of God, and not of the credit we may gain. And so though by loving our neighbour and our enemy we shall win heaven, we are not to think of the heaven we shall win, we are to think of our neighbour and our enemy."*

It is quite clear that the writers of the New Testament (for they all agree with these quotations

* *Ecce Homo*, 116, 118.

from St. John's Gospel and the Epistle to the Hebrews) regarded the Person of Jesus Christ in His whole life, His actions and His teaching, as constituting a manifestation of the spiritual and moral character of God in a manner too which had never been effected by any previous revelation.*

The Psalmist says that "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."† St. Paul, too, asserts that "the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity; that they (*i.e.* the Gentiles) may be without excuse."‡ When, however, man has inquired what is the moral character of this God of the Universe, what of His justice, His mercy and His holiness, Nature alone has not given a certain answer to all men who in the olden days sought after the Lord if haply they might find Him. It was reserved for the Son of Man to reveal what was before obscure in the moral government of God, so that "he who hath now seen Him, hath seen the Father;" and this manifestation of the Father is none other than simply the Life and character, the work and teaching of Jesus Christ as portrayed to us by the Evangelists and in the Epistles.§

* See Row, *l.c.*, p. 322. † Ps. xix. 1. ‡ Rom. i. 20, 21.
§ See this ably discussed by Row, *l.c.*, chapter xv.

Let us then first hear the testimony of the Son of Man Himself on this point. Jesus saith unto Thomas, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also; from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him. . . He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. . . . Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say unto you, I speak not from myself; but the Father abiding in me doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me."*

The only interpretation possible of these utterances of the Lord's, is that God, being from His very nature invisible to mortal eyes, could only be seen in the moral perfection of our Lord's character as displayed in His life and teaching; that the words and actions of the Son were the words and actions of the Father, and lastly, the knowledge of Jesus Christ involves the knowledge of the Father, and that such knowledge was life eternal.

So again, when Jesus said:—"I and my Father are one. . . . If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me and I in the Father."†

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* John xiv. 6, *seqq*. † John x. 30-39.

The reader will doubtless recall many other and similar utterances of Jesus Christ which testify to the same thing, that He and His Father were one: such, for example, as:—"I am the Light of the World." . . They said therefore unto Him, where is thy Father? Jesus answered, "Ye know neither me nor my Father; if ye had known me, ye would know my Father also."*

We could not have plainer assertions, I repeat, than these that Jesus distinctly regarded Himself as the visible, personal revelation of the moral perfections of God the Father.

That the Evangelist St. John fully recognized Him to be such, he has declared in the commencement of his Gospel:—"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God." This Word he declares to be identical with Jesus Christ; and he adds:—"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him." In these words he virtually asserts that "Jesus Christ in his incarnate personality is the revelation of the moral and spiritual attributes of God."† He uses similar words in his Epistle:—"We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, *even* in His

* John viii. 12-19.

† Row, *l.c.*, 326.

Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."*

From this we must conclude that just as Christ bore witness to this truth, so was it the great end and purpose of this beloved disciple to bear similar witness to the eternal life which was manifested in Jesus Christ.

There is an obvious difference between the fourth Gospel and the other three; in that while St. John's is descriptive of the Messiah or King of the Kingdom of Heaven, those of the other three Evangelists are descriptive of the kingdom of the Messiah. Nevertheless, St. Matthew records a very remarkable utterance of Our Lord's which "unquestionably shows that Jesus claimed for Himself the character of the revealer of the Father"†:—"At that season Jesus answered and said, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding and didst reveal them unto babes; yea, Father, for so it was well pleasing in thy sight. All things have been delivered to me of my Father, and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father, neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.'"‡

In these words Jesus describes Himself as "a

* 1 John v. 20. † Row, *l.c.*, 332.
‡ Matt. xi. 25-27.

Being whom none can fully comprehend but God; who has a perfect knowledge and comprehension of God; and who, while He possesses this knowledge, is also man. Such must be, in the highest sense of these words a manifestation of the Divine in a human personality."*

"The gracious invitation by which this utterance is followed," observes Prebendary Row, "proves that when our Lord affirmed that He was the sole revealer of the Father, the revelation made in His person is a moral and spiritual revelation.

"'Come unto me,' He says, 'all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'†

"This invitation, and the declaration that He is the exclusive source of all knowledge of the Father, stand here in the closest connection with each other. 'I will give you rest,' says our Lord. The rest which He promises is obviously the result of that knowledge of God which He is prepared to reveal; for a knowledge of His moral character and perfections is that alone which can afford rest and refreshment to the wearied spirit of man under the burden of sin and suffering, and the uncer-

* Row, *l.c.*, 332. † Matt. xi. 28-30.

tainties of earthly things. But how is this rest to be obtained? By coming to Him and learning of Him. 'Learn of Me,' He says, 'for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls.'

"As He teaches by means of the moral and spiritual perfections which shine forth in His Divine character, this meekness and condescension must therefore have something in them which corresponds to the character of His Father; for without this it would be incapable of affording rest to the human spirit.

"Lastly:—His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Where then is the yoke and the burden referred to? Obviously the divine laws of the kingdom of God, in contrast to that yoke [the ceremonial law to which the Pharisees had added many burdens by the traditions of men, which we elsewhere read of as] a burden too heavy to be borne. Our Lord however, in His perfect knowledge of God, has a Divine law to proclaim, under which obedience will no longer be a heavy yoke, but the loving service of children rendered to a loving God; for 'God is Love.'"*

There are, indeed, many statements of our Lord which clearly prove that He was ever and fully conscious of possessing a superhuman character.

* Row, *l.c.*, 332, 333.

Such, for example, is the following:—"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." "Every one who shall confess me before men him will I confess before my Father who is in heaven."* "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory."†

"Utterances such as these—and the evangelists abound with them—are only explicable on the assumption that He who uttered them had an habitual consciousness of the indwelling of the Divine. It is simply incredible that one who like our Lord was perfectly self-possessed, and free from all taint of fanaticism, could have spoken thus if He had regarded Himself as an ordinary man or even as a prophet. In that case the arrogance of the utterer would have been inconsistent with humility or holiness. Yet the character of our Lord as it is depicted by the evangelists is one in which the humility is perfect, while it is habitually united with a self-consciousness of greatness."‡

Once more, then, do we arrive at the conclusion that "if our Lord was thus habitually conscious of the indwelling in Himself of the Divine, it follows that His Person, actions and teaching collectively constitute a revelation of the moral and spiritual character of God;"§ and such is the Gospel.

* Matt. x. 32, 37.
† Matt, xxv. 31.
‡ Row, *l.c.*, 335.
§ Row, *l.c.*, 336.

Moreover, when we turn to St. Paul's writings, we find that he testifies to the same truth. He speaks of Christ as being "the image of the invisible God." "It was the pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness (*i.e.* of the Godhead) dwell."* Again :—"Seeing," he says, "that the Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block and unto Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."† Lastly he says :—"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."‡

Now, when St. Paul uses the expression "*fulness*," as in the words "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,"¶ it would have a much more definite and important meaning to his readers than it does to us. For, as Prebendary Row observes§ in the philosophical systems of his day it was imagined that a number of intermediate agencies existed between the supreme God and this universe, which were called "Eons;" some and the least perfect of which were supposed to have made the world. "The fulness of the Godhead" meant therefore in these systems Deity in its most absolute form; Deity, as it existed apart from its eonic emanations and from all the confusion which the remote and imperfect

* Col. i. 15, 19. † 1 Cor. i. 22-24.
‡ 2 Cor. v. 19. ¶ Col. i. 9. § *l.c.*, 329.

Eons were supposed to have introduced into the universe. "Hence it would have been hardly possible for St. Paul to have employed language which would have conveyed to their minds in more definite terms the idea that God had made an objective revelation of Himself in the incarnate person of our Lord, than in the words, 'In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.'"*

It has been necessary to make the preceding quotations from Scripture though they may be perfectly familiar to the reader, in order to show the grounds for regarding the description of the Person and Character of the Messiah as the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This was what constituted the subject-matter of the preaching of the Apostles and of their Epistles to the Churches: so that when St. Paul went to the Corinthians he determined to know nothing amongst them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified; that is, the history of the Person, Character, doings and sayings of Jesus Christ while He was upon earth. This was the Gospel, or as St. Paul says to the Romans:—"The word is nigh thee in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is the word of faith which we preach; because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."† And this agrees

* Row, *l.c.*, 329. † Rom. x. 8, 9.

with what St. John says:—"Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God."*

Thus, then, do we discover the simple requirements of a member of the Kingdom of Heaven, viz., that he recognize Jesus Christ as the representative of God; that he fully believe that when he has seen Christ, he has seen God; that the life of Jesus Christ on earth was a perfect and most holy standard for comparison for all human lives, because it is the standard of God Himself, and that any thought, word or act of his which falls short of that standard, falls short to the same degree in the sight of God and is imperfect, defective or criminal as the case may be, in the Father's eyes.

"God is Love," and in that one word "Love" is really summed up the Gospel of Salvation. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him and he in God. And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is Love: and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is even so are we in this world."†

We could not well have a more explicit statement

* 1 John iv. 2. † 1 John iv. 15-17.

of the character of a member of the Kingdom of Heaven than this: and when St. Paul and the apostles preached the Gospel, what they did was to put plainly before their hearers the character of Jesus Christ as exemplified in His Life and Death, bid them come forth from the world, repent of their sins, declare themselves willing to be His followers, by so doing exhibiting their Faith; and if called upon to do so, not to hesitate to die for Him.

And what was to be the mutual relationship between all who will come to Jesus, that is all who call themselves Christians and members of the Kingdom of Heaven?

Our Lord has told us unmistakably that such are *Brethren*:—"Be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, and *all ye are brethren*. Call no man your father on the earth;* for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, even the Christ."†

As Jesus came to reveal in Himself the Fatherhood of God; so as a consequence all men become brothers in the Lord; and this involves the great moral responsibility of each individual member "to do everything in his power to promote the happiness and the well-being of every Christian

* Compare Texts, p. 222. † Matt. xxiii. 8-10.

brother, as St. Paul says, 'Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbour's good.'"*

It is by no means easy for us Christians of this age to understand what a startling revelation this must have been to the ancient heathens. The entire life of sin and selfishness which the Gentiles followed with impunity or even with the sanction of their religion, utterly unconscious as they were of doing anything wrong, was by sharp contrast with the pure and unselfish life of Jesus brought into the strongest light. For the first time in his life the heathen would understand what *sin* meant. It came upon him as an awful revelation when he learnt to know what God was, by seeing with his mind's eye the express image of the Father as portrayed to him by the Apostle when preaching "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." He had before called his chief god "Father-Jove;" but we must remember it was but a miserable travesty of a father, and without any moral idea involved in it whatever. But when it was revealed to him that this heavenly Father was a Father of love, mercy and justice; and that the Son of God, whom Paul preached, was the revelation on earth of the character of God the Father, a new world, as it were, was opened out to the astonishment of the heathen. His instincts lain dormant for centuries woke up to the great Truth

* 1 Cor. x. 24; Row, *l.c.*, 245. See also *supra, Who are Christians?* p. 195.

that there was but One God, the Holy Father of all men and nations, that all men of all nations were Brothers in God, that he himself must now hate his past life, spent in ignorance of sin, and turn to the living God in purity, truth and love.

All who would do this became members of the kingdom of Heaven and were saved.

Such was the Gospel of salvation.

Let us now once more turn back to the question, what is the Gospel? and see if the general answer to it is anything like the preceding. We can find an answer in the Athanasian Creed:*—"Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith, which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." Then follows an elaborate and minute description of the essence of the Three Persons of the Trinity. It has remained for this advanced age of the world to discover what seems now self-evident, that man cannot possibly know anything of the nature of God. Our minds being finite it is not in our own power to know what infinity is; much less can we comprehend the infinite power and wisdom of God, nor the absolute perfection of His love, mercy and justice. We really know nothing as to *how* our bodies are united to our own souls. How can we

* The following is adapted from Prebendary Row's work, *l.c.*, Chapter xvi.

then possibly be certain as to how God was in Christ; or how or whether the Spirit proceeds from the Son or from the Father or from both? "It seems hardly credible to us now, but it is an historical fact that the question whether the Spirit proceeds from the Father only, or from the Father *and* the Son, formed one of the four points of difference which produced the rupture of the negotiations between the Eastern and Western Churches; and the consequent withholding of aid to the crumbling empire of the Greeks in the hour of its utmost need. Of this the permanent enthronement of the Turkish power over Oriental Christendom has been the result."*

Human reason is absolutely powerless to fathom the depths of the Divine Being and nature, and yet in our so-called Athanasian Creed, theologians of the past—when they were far less learned than they are now—did not hesitate to draw up an entire creed of details of this nature and declare them to be essential portions of Christianity which must be accepted and believed in under peril of damnation. "It contains no less than seventy dogmas respecting various abstract points concerning the Divine Being, and then proceeds to affirm that 'whosoever will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.' But the imposition of this burden on

* Row, *l.c.*, 356.

the consciences of others was far from contenting its author; for he immediately adds:—'Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ;' and then proceeds not simply to affirm it as a matter of fact, in language taken from the Scripture, but to propound a number of abstract propositions respecting the being and mode of the union of the Divine and human in our Lord's person; and concludes with the affirmation, 'This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved.'

"But a higher authority has affirmed the belief in the Catholic faith which is necessary to salvation to be as follows:—'The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach; because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.'*

"If St. Paul is right, it is evident that the creed has added a number of most unnecessary conditions."†

Finally, compare the Athanasian Creed pronounced as necessary to salvation with our Lord's utterances when *He* preached the Gospel of Salvation:—"And

* Rom. x. 8-10. † Row, *l.c.*, 365.

he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up; and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the Prophet Isaiah; and he opened the book and found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' And he closed the book and gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened upon him; and he began to say unto them,—'This day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears.'"*

Such was the Gospel of the Good News, of forgiveness of sins, and salvation to every one who repents, believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and is baptized; who recognizes Love as the bond of union between man and man, whereby they become brothers in the Lord, and that henceforth and for ever Man is reconciled to God, reconciled to his fellow-man and reconciled to his lot and duties on earth.

Such is the Gospel and such is portrayed in the Life, Character, Actions and Teachings of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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* Luke iv. 16-21.

CONCLUSION.—I have now completed the task I set myself, of reconsidering certain Christian Beliefs in the light of modern thought. Such portions of this book as have already appeared in print and have been discussed by my previous readers, led me to hope that a further treatment of the several features of the Scheme of Redemption would not be altogether unacceptable; but that my attempts will meet with some disapproval I am also prepared to hear. Yet, as my sole object is to find an answer to the question "What is Truth?" if any of my positions be proved to be logically untenable, I shall be ready at once to surrender such to any more powerful and convincing argument with which I may be favoured.

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